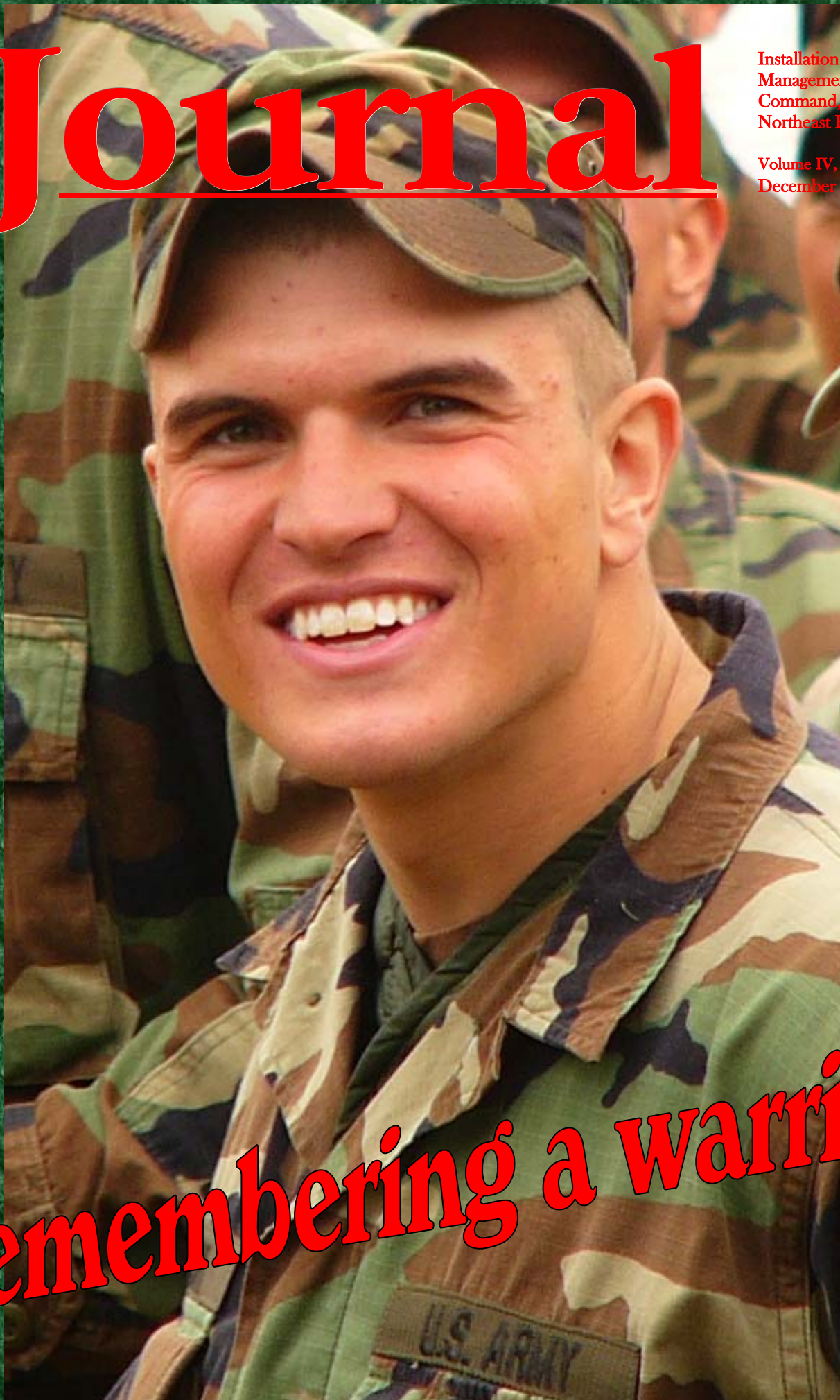


Journal

Installation
Management
Command,
Northeast Region

Volume IV, No. 12
December 1, 2006



Remembering a warrior

Army Strong: We can do the job

By Col. Brian W. Lauritzen
Fort Belvoir Installation Commander

By the time hostilities reached a global stage, the defense establishment came to the conclusion that it would be necessary to realign many of the command-and-control assets in the National Capital Area. Significant activities would have to be closed in the move to consolidate the various functions. For example, 1,243,049 square feet of office and leased space would be vacated and the employees moved to a central, secure building complex.

Planners soon realized that transportation would become a central issue. In order to support their realignment, 30 miles of new roadway on five separate routes, three new cloverleaves and 21 overpasses would be necessary. New commuting patterns would have to be studied and applied to the design and construction processes. A major bypass to avoid built-up areas and to funnel traffic more expeditiously was determined critical to the project's success.

Criticism reached fevered pitches regarding inability to include mass transit upgrades and to complete efforts to make commuting more agreeable and as efficient as possible. One major initiative involved the ability to discharge tens of thousands of workers at their new work location. An early plan examined the feasibility of large parking areas for privately owned vehicles, each capable of holding several thousand vehicles.

The media enjoyed numerous opportunities to assess the entire project. The press strongly criticized the overall cost of the realignment and the secondary uses of the new complex. They expressed particular concern that no funds had been appropriated for transportation infrastructure improvements in the surrounding community in the initial Congressional legislation. Actually, when finally completed, the amount spent on transportation improvements accounted for fully one third of the total cost of the project.

Since the area for the proposed new complex was effectively rural, there were plenty of open spaces for new buildings. Population shifts potentially involved large numbers of contractors and service workers. The planners

also had to wrestle with the many problems of access control and security.

"We've done this before, and we can do it again."

Civilian security companies were contracted to provide access control. Many of these guards were former servicemen and women. Once complete, however, the degree of force protection was a great improvement over the previous system of wide dispersion in city office buildings.

Though this sounds familiar in light of the challenges of the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure process, the description really refers to some of the issues involved in planning and building the Pentagon in 1942 and 1943. In 1942, the War Department faced the challenges of moving more than 23,000 employees from at least 17 different sites around Washington D.C. into one central location while fighting World War II on many fronts. The BRAC law re-

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The Northeast Journal is an authorized publication of the U.S. Army Installation Management Command, Northeast Region, Fort Monroe, Va. It is published electronically the first of each month. Contributions are welcome and may be submitted to the editor via e-mail:

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2nd Place Winner

Newsletters category

2004 U.S. Army Keith L. Ware

Newspaper Competition



Front Page: After four years of fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan, most Americans seem untouched by the casualties coming from those sites of conflict. While the nightly news reports a steady, daily tally of Soldiers killed in action, the numbers are meaningless unless you know the face attached to today's number. On Nov. 17 one of the numbers from two days earlier had a face... Ryan Dennison's his story begins on page 36.

(Photo by Sandy Goss)

Fort Drum civilian employee earns Stalwart Award

Story and photo by Stephanie J. Santos
Fort Drum Blizzard Staff Writer

Every installation has a backbone – a person who sets standards for others to follow and leads by example. For Fort Drum, that person is Judith L. Gentner, deputy to the garrison commander.

For nearly a decade, Gentner has served as the right hand for each garrison commander and has “built a bridge” between the command group, Soldiers, civilians employees and community members.

Her steadfast work ethic and trademark leadership personality earned her the Stalwart Award for the Northeast Region. She was formally presented this award by Brig. Gen. John A MacDonald, deputy commander, Installation Management Command, Nov. 1 in Orlando, Fla. Only eight civilian employees, representing the Installation Management Agency and headquarters, were selected for this prestigious award.

This recognition is given annually to recognize “model leaders” and the outstanding accomplishments and qualities they have demonstrated in their careers. This is the second straight year a Fort Drum employee has won this award.

“I was both surprised and honored to receive the award,” Gentner said. “It makes me feel good to know that I am doing the best job that I can in support of our Soldiers and their families and our civilian workforce. It’s the job that brought me here, but it’s the people that have kept me here.”

As deputy to the commander, Gentner said her job is always changing, and she spends most days dealing with several issues at once. But she manages to stay grounded and keep focused, even in the most challenging



Judith L. Gentner, deputy to the garrison commander and Stalwart Award winner.

matters.

“I care about the employees, and I’m willing to do what it takes to make a change, stand up for what I believe in and persevere.”

Col. David J. Clark, garrison commander, nominated Gentner for the award. He described her as a “true leader.”

“Judy’s reputation precedes her in every way. You know it when you see her, and you can look at the evidence right here at Fort Drum,” Clark said.

“She took limited resources and got maximum results. She managed to keep a workforce that is understaffed motivated. That takes true leadership; she deserved to be recognized.”

While at Fort Drum Gentner spearheaded the Leader Enhancement and Development Education Requirement, or LEADER, program.

She said the program is designed to help civilian employees progress

personally and professionally. Once accepted into the program, each participant is assigned a mentor and receives formal training as well as opportunities to participate in developmental experiences and assignments.

“We want to give the workforce a chance to expand their comfort zone and experience new things and help them throughout their careers,” Gentner said.

She added that Fort Drum’s expansion is a key area of interest and top priority for the command.

“We’re working as fast as we can to build barracks and new housing on post,” she said. “We’re pulling together as a team, and we’re making things happen.”

She said her recent recognition comes from having a staff that is in it for the long haul.

“This is the best installation by far, hands down,” Gentner said. “I think for our civilian employees here, it’s more than a job; it’s their patriotic service to the country.”

Fort Belvoir's garrison assumes responsibility for implementing post's BRAC execution process

By Stacy Sneed
Fort Belvoir Eagle Staff writer

Army officials and planners came together with local and state officials recently during a Belvoir Board of Advisors meeting to discuss the most recent developments pertaining to Fort Belvoir's realignment under Base Realignment and Closure law.

Military District of Washington Commander Maj. Gen. Guy Swan announced early in the meeting that authority to execute the BRAC mission at Fort Belvoir has been transferred from the Army's Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff for Installation Management to U.S. Army Garrison, Fort Belvoir.

Installation Commander Col. Brian Lauritzen now has direct control and responsibility for implementing BRAC at Fort Belvoir, including the execution of the contract with Belvoir New Vision Planners, the team of civilian planners, engineers, architects and environmental and transportation experts selected by the Army to lead the realignment process.

Swan also told the group that the Board of Advisors has exceeded all expectations in regard to maintaining communications with BRAC stakeholders, and encouraged them to continue their efforts.

Under BRAC 2005, Fort Belvoir will experience a net gain of approximately 22,000 people - about 5,000 military personnel and 17,000 civilians. In order to accommodate this migration of people, the base will require construction of several new facilities. Regardless, the law requires that all personnel realignments be in place

by Sept. 15, 2011.

Six major concerns dominated the flow of the meeting: increased traffic flow and its impact on the community; infrastructure improvements; mass transit support capabilities; external studies integration with the Virginia and Fairfax County departments of transportation; the installation transportation management plan; and the support infrastructure.

JoAnn Blanks, deputy to the installation commander, briefed the group on the progress and concerns of the BOA's transportation working group.

"We need to evaluate our transportation plan," said Blanks, who also said the working group had recommended that the board look at opportunities for local communities to leverage grants available through the Office of Economic Adjustment for transportation studies. The OEA falls under the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and is charged with helping state and local governments plan and carry out community adjustment and diversification programs related to BRAC actions.

While transportation is a the top BRAC-related concern facing Fort Belvoir and the local community, Washington Headquarters Services' Brad Provancha suggested that the group should look beyond the transportation-specific issues at other trends in the region which also impact on transportation.

Provancha suggested "looking at the big picture - both job and growth projections."

Lauritzen agreed, saying that growth

throughout the region must be taken into account when planning for growth at Fort Belvoir.

"I think we need to look at the whole picture, not just Fort Belvoir and BRAC, but the other initiatives [underway in the region] as well," Lauritzen said.

One of the key transportation improvements in the area - the completion of the missing link of the Fairfax County Parkway, is vital to BRAC development. The parkway connector will run through the Engineer Proving Ground, where plans call for 18,000 of the 22,000 incoming employees to work.

"Unless we get the parkway funded in the spring, it won't be in place by Sept. 2011. What's the most optimistic time frame to serve [the Engineer Proving Ground]?" asked Lee District Supervisor Dana Kauffman.

BNVP transportation expert James Curren responded frankly saying, "We're going to be hard-pressed even if someone says, 'Here's the money.' It's a minimum of two years to build a parkway."

According to Curren, progress has been made on actions needed to complete the parkway.

"VDOT has initiated the acquisition of Central Motors [which stands in the path of construction]," Curren said. "Along with VDOT, the Attorney General's office, Army, and [the U.S. Department of Transportation] are working to finalize the Fairfax County Parkway agreements, the

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quires the relocation of more than 22,000 employees to Fort Belvoir, while fighting the Global War on Terror.

Another similarity is also striking: The gross floor space of the Pentagon occupies 6,636,360 square feet; the new construction at Fort Belvoir by 2011 will occupy about 7,000,000 square feet.

My point is this: We've done this before, and we can do it again. By working together, keeping the lines of communication open, and leaving no daylight between us, we can get the job done. The Pentagon project should provide more than enough evidence that complex problems can be solved. We have the talent. We are Army Strong, and we are America Strong!

I would like to acknowledge the use of the book, "The Pentagon, The First Fifty Years" by Alfred Goldberg and our installation historian, Gus Person, in collecting the facts for this article.

Eustis, Story celebrate new housing

By Ryan Brus,
Fort Eustis Public Affairs

Forts Eustis and Story conducted ribbon-cutting ceremonies Oct. 26 celebrating the installations' newly constructed houses. The ceremonies, each with musical entertainment, also featured open houses for everyone to view.

"There used to be a TV show with Mr. Rogers and he talked about 'It's a wonderful day in the neighborhood,' and this truly is a wonderful day in the neighborhood," said Deputy Assistant Secretary to the Army for Privatization and Partnerships, Bill Armbruster.

GMH Military Housing is Forts Eustis and Story's partner in creating the new housing.

The Military Housing Privatization Initiative, passed in 1996, allows the military services to seek partnerships with private developers to improve housing on military installations.

"We are getting out of the housing business," said Armbruster. "We are letting the private sector and the developers do what they do best."

GMH has a 50-year partnership in which more than \$627 million will be invested in the Forts Eustis and Story housing communities, according to a GMH fact sheet.

"We are here for the duration, which is unlike your typical military construction where contractors come in, build and then leave," said GMH project director Brad Collier.

GMH has partnered with several Army installations such as Fort Bliss, Texas, and Fort Gordon, Ga., to improve post housing. Collier said GMH is transforming every home at every installation they partner with.

GMH officially started the transformation process for Forts Eustis and Story in December 2004. Part of the planning process included the using focus groups. Collier said one of the focus group recommendations GMH implemented was placing the washer and dryer units on the second floor. However, a large improvement made to the new housing is the increase in space. All of



Sgt. 1st Class Valore Foy-Jones cuts the ribbon alongside her family and dignitaries in celebration of the newly constructed post housing. The Foy-Jones family is one of 43 military families who have received keys to a new Fort Eustis house.
(photo by J. Raynel Koch)

the new houses are three- or four-bedroom setups, unlike the older houses where many are two bedrooms. The four-bedroom houses are 1,940 square feet. Collier said the new houses are likely bigger than any previous post house military people have lived in.

The interior of the houses at both installations are the same. The exteriors are different, however, to reflect the houses' locale. Fort Story's new houses have a sea-side theme, while Fort Eustis' have a Williamsburg colonial theme, according to a GMH fact sheet.

Collier said the new houses are valued between \$320,000 and \$350,000 in the Hampton Roads market. However, he said it was difficult to determine the exact value because housing values in Newport News vary significantly to those in Virginia Beach.

The new housing plan for the installations will create four neighborhoods. However, creating new neighborhoods requires demolishing existing ones.

"The plan requires that we build an initial set of housing and then move indi-

viduals from existing housing into the new housing," Collier said.

From there, Collier said the existing housing the individuals move out of will be demolished either for additional new housing construction or for government use.

Collier said unfortunately due to the project's scale, all new housing completion simply "doesn't happen over night."

"So, although not everyone is going to be able to take advantage of the new housing here, they will be able to experience it at any one of the other privatized sites they may be assigned to in the future," Collier said.

Currently, 51 of the projected 599 junior enlisted, senior enlisted and junior officer houses are completed. Collier said all the construction will be completed in the summer of 2011.

"Having been in the military and now working for GMH, this is the best project I have ever worked on," Collier said. "It really has such a tremendous impact on the quality of life for our military families, which they deserve."

Wounded Warrior Symposium: Soldiers, families stitch lives back together

by Matt McFarland
Pentagram staff writer

Some of the wounds are still healing. Some losses, like limbs, can never be replaced. At the Army's Wounded Warrior Symposium in Arlington this week, 55 severely injured Soldiers and their families opened up about the most painful, trying events of their lives.

They can empathize with Soldiers who may find themselves on a gurney with a bloody stump, or wake up in a hospital bed with a breathing tube shoved down

their throat. There isn't bitterness or anger, just ideas of how a difficult road could be a little smoother.

The Army Wounded Warrior Program helps severely wounded Soldiers and their families resolve problems and overcome obstacles they may encounter.

The intent of this symposium -- the second one in the last six months -- is to understand and prioritize these issues as families navigate the maze of benefits throughout hospitalization, recovery, rehabilitation and transition back into

the Army or their civilian community.

The two year old program started with only five employees and has grown to more than 60 employees, with Soldier family management specialists at major military installations, military treatment facilities and Veterans Administration medical centers. More than 1,400 wounded warriors and their families are served.

Staff Sgt. Johnathan Holsey, who lost

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[description of proposed actions and alternatives] has been completed with the [environmental impact statement] underway, and discussions between Army and [VDOT regarding the high occupancy toll lane] project have started."

The Board of Advisors is comprised of the installation commander, key members of his command group and staff, elected officials of the Fairfax County and Prince William County boards of supervisors, a representative from the Fairfax County Schools system, and representatives of major government agencies being relocated to Fort Belvoir under BRAC 2005. Their purpose is to ensure that all stakeholders have the opportunity to review initiatives, voice concerns, provide commentary, and make recommendations regarding BRAC implementation at Fort Belvoir.

Fort Belvoir launches master planning process

By Paul J. Reagan
Fort Belvoir Eagle Special correspondent

Fort Belvoir has launched a comprehensive master planning process that will guide the installation's land use strategies through 2030 and advance the Army's goal of trans-

forming Fort Belvoir into a world-class military installation.

At a kick-off meeting held Nov. 7, Installation Commander Col. Brian W.

Lauritzen said the eight-month planning process would begin almost immediately with the development of a vision statement by Thanksgiving and would conclude with the submission of a final plan in June of next year.

"With this master planning process, we are moving on a parallel track with the extensive work that is already being done on the BRAC realignment,"

Lauritzen explained. "The BRAC realignment is necessarily focused on the immediate need to develop siting and infrastructure plans for the Engineer Proving Ground and the parts of the main post impacted by BRAC. The master planning process will examine the needs of the rest of the installation and align our long-term plan with the BRAC moves and the new vision for Fort Belvoir."

"This kick-off for the master plan represents yet another step forward in our efforts to make Fort Belvoir an even better place to live and work," he added.

The master plan will be developed by Belvoir New Vision Planners, a joint venture between the engineering firms PBS&J and SOM that is also planning and managing the Fort Belvoir BRAC realignment.

At Tuesday's meeting, project manager Ken Kost said his team would be guided by several core principles, including strong environmental stewardship and reducing the necessity for employees to use their cars during the workday to access food service and other amenities.

Preserving Fort Belvoir's character and historical legacy for future generations is also a high priority.

Kost described a planning approach characterized by three broad steps:

developing a vision and general goals; evaluating alternatives and selecting a plan; and implementing the plan. The process will ultimately result in an installation design guide and a capital investment strategy. Specific area development plans will be developed for the airfield, community support area, lower north post, hospital, town center, 1400 area, industrial area, and 300 area.

Lauritzen concluded Tuesday's meeting by urging all of the stakeholders on Fort Belvoir to participate actively in the work on the master plan.

"To achieve our goals and to realize our ambitious vision for Fort Belvoir, we need everyone to get actively involved in this process, Lauritzen said.

Editor's note: Paul J. Reagan is with McGuire Woods Consulting, a public relations firm delivering communications services to Belvoir New Vision Planners.

At Tobyhanna a keen eye and soft touch are needed to work with glass wires

by Anthony Ricchiazzi
Tobyhanna Depot Public Affairs Office

TOBYHANNA ARMY DEPOT, Pa. - An instructor here is training Army civilians in building cables that can transmit gigabytes of information in the form of light.

Paul Baumes (a resident of Hughestown), an instructor in the Technical Development Division, has taught more than 100 depot employees how to build and repair fiber optic cables. He is assisted by Dave Jurosky (a resident of Dickson City), another instructor.

One fiber optic, a strand of special glass as thin as a human hair, can transmit more data faster than copper wires.

"Tobyhanna has been working with fiber optics for more than 10 years," said Cal Morgan (a resident of Weatherly), chief of the depot's Electronic Services Division. "We repair, fabricate and test fiber optics systems."

"I've been training field service representatives for the PM TOCs (program manager of the U.S. Army Tactical Operations Center system), 'Reach Back' individuals and depot employees who asked for the training," Baumes said.

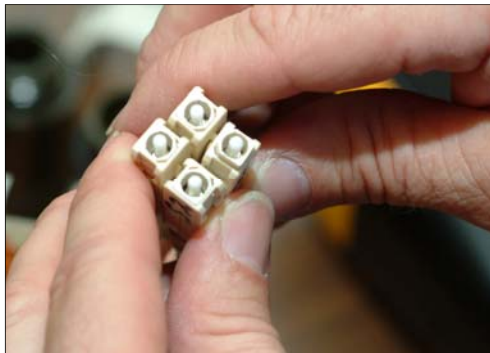
Reach Back individuals are those who fill a field service representative's slot at a Forward Repair Activity when the representative deploys overseas.

The 40-hour course is composed of hands-on training and practical exercises in how to construct fiber optic patch cords using various connector ends and second generation tactical fiber optic cable assemblies, called TFOCA II.

A TFOCA II is a fiber optic cable composed of four fiber optic connectors mounted into a plug or receptacle. Patch cords are fiber optic cables used to link equipment to a fiber optic network.

The course is divided into introduction to basic fiber optic repair and construction, utilizing connectors in multimode cable and specifics of TFOCA II.

There are two primary types of fiber



Tobyhanna Army Depot employees are learning to build fiber optic connectors like this one. The training is being provided by depot Technical Development Division personnel to improve depot support of U.S. Army Tactical Operations Centers. (U.S. Army photo by Steve Grzedzinski)

optic cables, multimode and single mode. Multimode fiber optic cables use light emitting diodes to transmit data via multiple modes of light simultaneously. "It is used for short distance transmission, such as LANs (local area networks) up to two kilometers (1.24 miles)," Baumes said.

Single mode fiber optics requires a laser light source to transmit data beyond two kilometers. Single mode fiber will only allow one light source at a time to be transmitted.

"Fiber optics is the wave of the future," Baumes said. "It's being used more and more as the demand for real-time data transmission continues to grow on and off the Electronic Battlefield."

Fiber Optics training includes termination techniques, fiber optic connector polishing, testing of complete cable assemblies and troubleshooting faulty cables.

Termination techniques entail constructing 4-channel cables with specially designed termini built specifically for TFOCA connectors and following procedures to ensure fiber optic cables meet specifications.

"Connector polishing means literally polishing the end of a fiber optic strand. Once construction of a connector is accomplished, there is excess fiber strand that is scribed (or etched so excess glass

can be removed with minimal damage) and removed following specific procedures. The end must then be polished so it transmits light beams as efficiently as possible," Baumes said. "Polishing is done by affixing the cable end into a 'polishing puck' and rubbing it in a figure eight motion over polishing paper."

The paper has very fine grits, from 12 microns to .3 microns, and can be aluminum oxide or diamond paper. A 400x power microscope is required to check the polished end of the glass strand. Baumes noted that the scribing and polishing are the critical parts of the process because signal loss will be significant if these steps are not precisely accomplished.

Tara Grohowski (a resident of Ashley) and Michael Ordonia agree that polishing is one of the most difficult challenges.

"The glass is very easy to break," Ordonia said. "If you break it, you have to start all over."

"It all comes down to a proper polish to prevent signal loss," Grohowski added.

Grohowski is an electronics worker in the Command, Control and Computer Systems-Avionics Directorate's Range Threat Division, but is currently working with Reset teams for Tactical Operations Center vehicles at Fort Lewis, Wash., and Fort Hood, Texas. Ordonia is an electronics equipment specialist assigned to the Forward Repair Activity at Fort Lewis.

Both took the training to make Reset and repair of TOCs easier, noting that fiber optics are used throughout the systems and that they will be able to show Soldiers how to make emergency repairs.

"It's good training and increases our Soldier support," Ordonia said.

Baumes said the training is not difficult for the students, but the work demands patience due to the delicacy of the components involved and the need for precision and good eye sight.

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"If one of the four connectors in a TFOCA II is broken or incorrectly constructed, the entire connector assembly must be redone,"

Baumes said. "The work is time consuming and repetitious. The construction process is very sensitive and requires a delicate touch and a good sense of feel to prevent the need for rework. It is an art form that requires repetition in the process to be successful on a regular and consistent basis."

Grohowski said it takes time to learn how to handle the fragile glass, but Baumes and Jurosky are very knowledgeable and helpful.

Tobyhanna Army Depot is the Defense Department's largest center for the repair, overhaul and fabrication of a wide variety of electronics systems and components, from tactical field radios to the ground terminals for the defense satellite communications network. Tobyhanna's missions support all branches of the Armed Forces.



Paul Baumes, standing, teaches a class of depot employees at Tobyhanna Army Depot how to build, troubleshoot and repair fiber optic cables and connectors. He has trained more than 100 depot employees. Baumes is assisted by Dave Jurosky. Both are training instructors in the Business Management Directorate's Technical Development Division.

(U.S. Army photo by Steve Grzedzinski)

About 4,400 personnel are employed at Tobyhanna, which is located in the

Pocono Mountains of northeastern Pennsylvania.

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part of a leg in Iraq, criticized the program for not being proactive about alerting Soldiers of services.

"You've got younger Soldiers who don't really know and are not as proactive, and they don't really know about much. And they don't really care because they just want to get out," Holsey said.

Army Wounded Warrior Program Director Col. Mary Carstensen acknowledged the young program is transitioning from a reactive to a proactive unit. Families are now assigned Soldier family management specialists, essentially personal assistants who help manage the many services government agencies offer.

Holsey spoke warmly of his time at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. "Everything you could have ever needed, anything you thought you needed, they made sure it was there for you."

Like many Soldiers with new prosthetics, he wondered how active and athletic he could be, with his left leg amputated below the knee.

Before the injury Holsey could run two miles in 13 minutes. At Walter Reed, he decided he would run two miles in 14 minutes. Three days a week at the hospital's track a therapist would run behind him, shouting suggestions of how Holsey could sharpen his new stride.

For motivation, Holsey, 32, set his sites on a 23-year-old who was running within four months of his own injury. Holsey still keeps in touch with the younger Soldier who now serves at Fort Stewart.

Holsey isn't looking to leave the Army. In fact, a second tour in Iraq wouldn't bother him.

He recently reported to basic non-commissioned officer course. At weigh-in Holsey noticed his peers eyeing his leg. The stares didn't bother him. "I made people comfortable, I would say stuff like 'I'm gonna put my other leg on later,'" Holsey said.

He has four. Each with a specialty: swimming, running, walking or high-impact. The high impact leg is his favorite. "You walk on it, play ball on it, ten-

nis, it's an everyday leg," Holsey said. He said he is as active now as before the injury.

Dressed in a suit and tie, 1st Lt. David Folkerts talked openly about his journey back from the IED that blew him 20 feet into the air, then left him in a pool of his own blood. "I was squirting out like a sprinkler," Folkerts said.

Medical care implanted a vein from his leg to save his left arm, but nerve damage to his left hand remained.

"I'm used to being the athlete. I'm used to doing the harder stuff in the Army," said the Ranger School graduate. "I want to be that leader who leads from the front," Folkerts said.

He was told he might never have use of his hand again. "I told them, 'No, no I'm gonna keep fighting,'" Folkerts said. The lieutenant painfully sat in Walter Reed, hearing updates from his buddies still in Iraq. He felt guilty for not being there. Slowly, he regained some feeling in his hand.

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For a time, he dodged the situation. "I kind of refused and almost denied that I had problems last year because I didn't want to talk to anybody about it," said Folkerts, who moved into an apartment on Fort Riley after leaving Walter Reed.

But he grew tired of feeling down about himself. So he visited family on weekends. Slowly, he began to accept and be comfortable with his disabled left arm.

"Just to be back in my unit and back in uniform and actually contributing really helped me out because I felt like I was part of the team again," Folkerts said. Also helpful was sharing an apartment with two officers who returned from Iraq.

His on-going journey brought him to the symposium to raise issues affecting injured Soldiers.

He's heard from Soldiers with internal injuries that aren't covered through Traumatic Service Group Life Insurance.

He also mentioned that injured Soldiers are awarded \$25,000 every 30 days that they fail to perform daily living activities. They can receive up to \$100,000. This quirk in the system gives Soldiers a disincentive to heal, he said.

"The ones that do know milk the system and keep waiting and waiting," Folkerts said.

Nearby, Spc. Venasio Sele walked through the symposium, curious of the services available to him.

It's the latest Army program to catch his eye. Sele joined the Army to learn technologies he didn't know as a trade school instructor. Sometimes he would get calls from an old friend at work, asking about a new technology. "We've already tested it," a proud Sele would say.

In Iraq his engineering unit patched damaged roads and chauffeured convoys out of Mosul. The convoys included two fuel tankers, which were needed to refuel the vehicles during the nine-hour missions. He rode as the gunner on the last Humvee.

An hour into the trip, Sele heard an IED detonate under the fuel tankers. The commander ordered him to guard the tankers as engineers determined whether the tankers could still be driven.

Then, from his perch atop the Humvee Sele spotted a small car approaching. "Hey, I got a suicide bomber coming in," Sele shouted.

"Are you sure? Shoot a warning shot," said his commander. Sele shot the warning shot. The car kept coming.

He was ordered to shoot.

Sele's fire killed the driver, flattened the tires and silenced the engine. But the momentum of the vehicle continued towards the fuel tankers.

As Sele fought to get out of his harness, he heard the beeping sound of a detonator.

The explosion of both fuel tankers launched him a half mile. "Till now I still hear that beeping sound," Sele said.

The Humvee's spare tire shielded him, saving his life. And he was lucky to land on the forgiving sand. But flames from the burning rubber licked the left side of his unconscious body.

Later his brigade commander visited him in the hospital. "Sir don't worry about it. They're just gonna patch me and the doctors are gonna send me back," Sele told him.

"You crazy? The doctors say you're severely injured," said the commander. Sele said he still loves his job and he said wants to stay in the Army.

At the symposium, Sele sat with Staff Sgt. John Noel. Both are visiting from the Brooke Army Medical Center.

Each Soldier at the convention has a story, perhaps none more difficult than Noel's. Although in some ways, Noel was very lucky.

Four days after the 4th of July, he rode with another unit on an ant-eater mission, essentially identifying IEDs in a vehicle with a V-shaped hull, which is designed to deflect anti-tank charges.

It was near midnight, and the four-man team peered outside the vehicle, looking for suspicious packages with wires attached. Then a 250-pound IED went off.

"Two hundred fifty pounds of explosives isn't going to be deflected," Noel said.

He remembers waking up in a fog and hearing people scream "Get him out! Get him out!" He tried to move his arms and legs but couldn't. Then he blacked out. His next memory was rolling out on a gurney from a tent hospital.

The 250-pound IED had broken two of his ribs, one femur, both ankles, his scapula, cut his spleen and collapsed a lung. Everyone else died.

Following surgery to install a titanium support in his backbone, he should be able to leave the wheelchair behind. Noel hopes to return to Texas with his son, who is currently living with his grandmother in Washington state.

He's gained an appreciation for those who will never walk again. "Even going to a restroom in some places can be difficult in a wheelchair," Noel said. He's encouraged parents to make their home more handicapped accessible so that it'll be livable for a greater part of the population.

Noel reported no problems with the Army's services for injured Soldiers but has heard stories of guys who have. "I hope to come away from this with the knowledge to be able to help somebody else out," Noel said.

Later this year the Army will release the ideas developed out of the symposium to help treat future wounded warriors.

The success of the symposium depends on the Army's ability to listen to and make changes based upon Soldiers' input. That will require the active participation of many organizations and agencies, including the Army's Human Resources Command, the G-1, Office of the Surgeon General, MEDCOM, and the Veteran's Administration.

Fallen Italian POWs honored

American and Italian officers honor World War II Italian prisoners of war buried at Fort Meade

By Don Hirst

SoundOff! Staff writer

The small group of Soldiers from two nations approached a special gravestone at the Fort Meade Cemetery on Nov. 20. It was the final resting place of Agostine Maffei, an Italian enlisted man who died in 1944 while a prisoner of war here and one of two Italian POWs buried in the post cemetery.

The Fort Meade group included Installation Commander Col. Kenneth O. McCreedy and Sgts. Tamika Robinson and Julian Salmon, both from Headquarters Command Battalion. Two Italian Army officers from the military attaché's office at their embassy in Washington, D.C. - Assistant Attaché Lt. Col. Enrico Rinaldi and Chief Warrant Officer Carlo Fiorani - stood there also.

They had come to Fort Meade to honor their fallen countrymen.

Rinaldi carried flowers that were placed by the gravestone dur-

ing the brief ceremony. The flowers joined an Italian flag that had been placed before it earlier by Fort Meade authorities. "We remember you," McCreedy said.

"Someone who gave his life for his country."

An Italian flag stands by the gravestone of Agostine Maffei, one of two Italian prisoners of war buried at the Fort Meade Cemetery.

The ceremony, an annual event here, is "a link between the past and present," McCreedy said, "a link that confirms our strong alliance."

At the opposite end of the cemetery, an Italian flag also graced the grave of the other deceased POW, Pasquino Savigini. The gravestone bore Savigini's name, date of death and status: "Soldato Italian."

Standing in front of Savigini's headstone, McCreedy gave a short command:

"Present arms!" Then, as honors were rendered, McCreedy said: "Soldato, we remember you."

McCreedy said it is "important for us to remember ... to take the time to honor" those who died far from home.

Rinaldi said it was "a great honor" to come to Fort Meade "to remember our dead." He noted that both nations are firmly committed to fighting the Global War on Terror. The ceremony "confirms our strong links to the United States of America."

'Buzzed' driving is DRUNK DRIVING

submitted by Fort Monmouth ASAP

The holiday season between Thanksgiving and New Year's is one of the deadliest and most dangerous times of the year due to an increase in impaired driving.

Since 1981, every President of the United States has demonstrated the commitment to preventing impaired driving by proclaiming December as National Drunk and Drugged Driving (3D) Prevention Month. This year's theme is "Buzzed Driving is Drunk Driving."

In fact, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), 1,201 people across America, just during the month of December 2005, were killed in highway crashes involving a driver or motorcycle operator with a blood alcohol level (BAC) of .01 or higher. In those crashes, 1,033 involved a driver with an illegal BAC level of .08 or above.

For those reasons, the Army Substance Abuse Program is joining with the Installation Safety Office and Directorate of Emergency Services to remind all holiday travelers and partiers that "Buzzed Driving is Drunk Driving!!" Never forget to designate a sober driver *before* the festivities begin. Too many people still don't understand that alcohol, drugs and driving just don't mix. Too many lives are still being lost.

Many office and holiday parties will take place this month. This is a critically important time of year to make sure you always designate a sober driver before the parties begin.

For a safer holiday season, the Army Substance Abuse Program offers these simple reminders:

* Plan ahead: Whenever you plan on consuming alcohol, designate your sober driver before going out and give that person your keys;

* If you're impaired, call a taxi, use mass

transit or call a sober friend or family member to get you home safely;

* Promptly report drunk drivers you see on the roadways to law enforcement;

* Wearing your seat belt or using protective gear on your motorcycle is your best defense against an impaired driver;

* And remember, "Friends Don't Let Friends Drive Drunk." If you know someone who is about to drive or ride while impaired, take their keys and help them make other arrangements to get to where they are going safely.

Driving any vehicle - including a motorcycle - while impaired is simply wrong and not worth the risk. Not only do you risk killing yourself or someone else, but the trauma and financial costs of a crash or an arrest for drunk driving are significant.

The Army Substance Abuse Program has Designated Driver Pins as well as alcohol free drink recipes for your office and holiday parties.

Celebrities visit Belvoir for movie screening

By Melina Rodriguez
Fort Belvoir Eagle Staff writer

The Fort Belvoir community and several celebrity actors came together Nov. 28 for an autograph signing and a special screening of a Hallmark Channel movie.

The special screening of the movie, *A Christmas Card*, began with an autograph signing at the Post Exchange at 4:30 p.m.

"My husband is deployed in Afghanistan right now," said Andrea Garon, military spouse, as she finished getting autographs to send to her husband. "I wanted to surprise him."

Four actors from the movie signed autographs, including the seven-time Emmy Award winning actor Ed Asner.

"My main target was to give as rascally an approach as I could," said Asner of his performance in the movie. "I wanted to give [my character] more of an edge."

The movie tells the story of a deployed Soldier in Afghanistan who receives a Christmas card addressed to "Any Soldier." During his rest and relaxation leave he goes to find the female writer of the card and he also finds love and a family.

"[This is] a nice way to tie [the movie] in with what is going on overseas," said co-star Alice Evans, who plays Faith, the writer of the Christmas card. "We thought the people at Fort Belvoir would understand that." After the autograph signing the cast and Fort Belvoir community members went to the newly renovated Wood Theater to watch the movie, scheduled for release on the Hallmark Channel on Dec. 2.

The theater was filled with a large variety of Fort Belvoir community members.

"[The movie] was very well orchestrated for a romantic movie," said Sgt. Dustin Nestoff, information systems analyst operator at the Defense Information Systems Agency. "It puts the military in a loving, friendly way."

Several children joined the crowd with their parents to watch the movie and eat popcorn.

"It was awesome, I enjoyed the whole thing," said Amanda Lugo, 11, who watched the movie with her mother.

The Hallmark Channel flew in one couple from Michigan because of their similar encounter with a letter in 1954.

"I loved it," said Victoria Brandel, military spouse. "Some of the things were exactly what I experienced. You could feel the chemistry between the two [main characters]."

Victoria and her husband Henry first began writing letters in 1954 when he was stationed in Korea. Victoria received his address from a friend and sent a letter and a self-portrait. They corresponded for a year before actually meeting in person.

In 1955 Henry was transferred to Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., several



Actors Ed Asner and John Newton sign autographs and share some laughs with Sgt. 1st Class Alberto Betancourt at the Main PX before a screening of the Hallmark movie "A Christmas Card" at Wood Theater recently.
(Photo by Marny Malin)

hundred miles from Victoria's hometown of Drumright, Okla.

Henry was in a July 4 parade in Drumright and when he finished he walked into the Dutch Mill Café, where Victoria was working at the time as a waitress. When she saw him she dropped a tray of glasses and he helped pick them up.

They have now been married for 51 years and have six sons, 10 grandchildren and 15 great grandchildren.

"He's my best friend," said Victoria with a smile on her face.

The movie ended around 7:30 p.m. and all viewers received a gift bag that contained a DVD copy of the movie.

"I thought it would be very nice to go through this activity," said Asner. "I was upraised and enlightened by meeting each and every one [of the people at Fort Belvoir], each and every one of them was a great specimen of being an American."

PM CCS Countermeasure Flares Team receives David Packard acquisition award

By Jennifer M. Keating
The Picatinny Voice

PICATINNY ARSENAL, N.J. — The Countermeasure Flares Team from the office of the Project Manager for Close Combat Systems here received the David Packard Excellence in Acquisition Award in recognition of their outstanding work in the field of Acquisition Logistics Nov. 8.

The Packard Award is the highest honor the Department of Defense can bestow upon acquisition professionals. It is presented to civilian and military organizations that have significantly contributed or have demonstrated exemplary innovations and best practices in the Defense acquisition process.

This is the second year in a row the Program Executive Office for Ammunition has been recognized for acquisition excellence.

Last year, the 40mm Systems Contracting Team of the Project Manager for Maneuver Ammunition Systems received the Packard award for its contributions.

The Countermeasure Flares Team members earned the distinguished award for their hands-on coordination with contractors to meet the Army's accelerated demand for the life-saving M211, M212 and M206 flares.

Through a combination of acquisition expertise, constant communication and quick action, the team provided exceptional management of increasingly



Members of the Countermeasure Flares Team and officials pose after the ceremony for the David Packard Excellence in Acquisition Award. They are Mary S. Adams (front row from left), Maj. Gen. Paul S. Izzo, Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics Kenneth J. Krieg, Rene Medina, Col. William W. Stevenson, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics, and Technology Claude M. Bolton Jr. and Santo Lombardo. Also shown are June DeSalvio (back row from left), Kelly Gorman, Sandra LaBell, Maj. Keith Taylor, Amanda Amoroso and Robert J. Ritchie.
(Courtesy photo)

larger contracts for countermeasure flares and production facility expansion to support higher production rates and an accelerated delivery process, expediting clearance and direct shipment of completed flares to Iraq.

The Countermeasure Flares Team received the award in conjunction with the Armament Research, Development and Engineering Center, the Rock Island-based Joint Munitions Command, the

contracting staffs of the Tank-Automotive and Armaments Command and the Army Field Support Command, and Communication Command's Infra-Red Flares Team.

This is the second award the Countermeasure Flares Team has received in two months; in October, they were the only team to be recognized by the Federal Executive Board for their exemplary achievements.

Depot helps educate college students

by Jacqueline Boucher
Tobyhanna Depot Public Affairs Office

[TOBYHANNA ARMY DEPOT](#), Pa. — Johnson College recognized Tobyhanna for helping educate and employ students via the Student Career Experience Program (SCEP).

The 2006 Community Partner Award was presented by Patrick Fricchione, president of Simplex Industries Inc., during the college's annual Community Partners recognition dinner. The dinner spotlights a local organization, company or individual who helped the college provide a foundation of education and skills necessary for specialized employment, career advance-

ment and life-long learning, according to Mary Lou Miller, director of Institutional Advancement for the Scranton college.

Last year's award recipient was Simplex Industries Inc.

The depot's program started in 2000 through joint efforts of the Tobyhanna,

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local colleges and technical schools, American Federation of Government Employees Local 1647, and local chambers of commerce and economic development agencies. Three local schools offering associate degrees in electronics, Johnson College, Luzerne County Community College (LCCC) and Northampton Community College (NCC), formally committed to the program in the first year.

Fourteen students who graduated the first program are working as full-time employees of the depot.

"Working closely with Johnson, we structured a program that enables students to augment their classroom training with real-world work experience," said Col. Ron Alberto, depot commander.

"Our SCEP students work on some of our armed forces' most critical command, control, communications, computer, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance systems."

Tobyhanna has partnerships with 12 area colleges and universities, and has graduated SCEPs with associate, bachelor and master degrees. Programs of study include electrical construction, carpentry, machining, diesel mechanics, safety, business and engineering, as well as electronics.

"Everyone who wants to work in the electronics field should take advantage of programs like this," said Mark Novack, electronics worker student trainee, Firefinder Division, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Directorate. He said, school officials explained how the combination of school academics and practical experience could enhance his future development.

Novak became interested in working at the depot after a friend got a job here. The senior is studying electronics technology and plans to remain at Tobyhanna after graduation.

He noted that working here as a student trainee has been "a great experience."

"We're delighted to recognize the many forms of support provided by Tobyhanna Army Depot to Johnson College and its students," Miller said. "The opportunities given to our students to partici-

pate in the depot's SCEP are invaluable for their career and future growth."

Students must maintain a 2.5 grade point average, be recommended by their schools and maintain high standards of conduct through their time in the program.

Another Johnson College senior wanted to see what it would be like working for the federal government.

"It's a very good opportunity; gaining practical experience while still in school," said Joseph Didino, electronics worker, Firefinder Division. Didino plans to work in the biomedical field, but said what he's learned here will be useful as he enters the workforce.

"We're honored and very grateful to count Tobyhanna among our friends and strongest supporters," Miller added. Over the years, the depot has worked with the college to adjust the curriculum as mission requirements evolve. The depot also provides guest lecturers for various classes.

"We gain the benefit of their technical training and their fresh views on our work processes. We provide them exposure to the talent and expertise within our work force. Upon graduation, the SCEP



Johnson College awarded the 2006 Community Partner Award to Tobyhanna Army Depot for helping to train and employ students studying electronics. From left, Dr. Ann Pipinski, Johnson College president, Patrick Frichione, president of Simplex Industries, Inc., Col. Ron Alberto, depot commander, and Dominick Carachilo, vice president of academic affairs.

(Courtesy Tobyhanna Public Affairs Office)

students are converted to fulltime employment at Tobyhanna. Based on their education and prior depot experience, we get new employees who hit the ground running," Alberto said.

In total, the school has provided 83 SCEP students; 64 have majored in electronics technology or biomedical equipment technology and have been placed in our electronics mechanics ranks, Jadick explained. Johnson has also supplied the depot with electrical construction, machining, diesel mechanics and carpentry SCEPS, he added.

The college estimates more than 200 graduates work here.

Tobyhanna Army Depot is the Defense Department's largest center for the repair, overhaul and fabrication of a wide variety of electronics systems and components, from tactical field radios to the ground terminals for the defense satellite communications network. Tobyhanna's missions support all branches of the Armed Forces.

About 4,400 personnel are employed at Tobyhanna, which is located in the Pocono Mountains of northeastern Pennsylvania.

Depot supports PA guard during Iraq deployment

by Kevin Toolan

Tobyhanna Depot Public Affairs Officer

TOBYHANNA ARMY DEPOT, Pa. Tobyhanna Army Depot helped the Pennsylvania Army National Guard's 1-109th Infantry get ready for its recent mission in Iraq, and provided support throughout its yearlong tour there.

Lt. Col. Michael Konzman, the battalion commander, recently visited the depot to present a certificate of appreciation to depot commander Col. Ron Alberto. "I just wanted to thank the depot for the great support: from your teams that were over there, to the assistance back here with technical support, to the MWR (morale, welfare and recreation) help to our Soldiers and families," Konzman said.

Several depot employees were among area residents called to active-duty for deployment with the unit, which faced the full spectrum of war-time operations, from combat operations to base security to transportation security. The unit operated primarily from an air base in the dangerous Al Anbar province. The unit mobilized from July 2005 to June of this year and comprised Task Force Blue Steel while in the theater of operations.

Konzman stated that the battalion had a peak strength of 1,100 Soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines and logged over 850,000 vehicle miles while completing more than 2,000 missions including base security, area security, convoy security and other combat and combat support operations. Other missions included providing security for the vice president and the recovery of a downed aircraft.



Members of the 1-109th Mechanized Infantry Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 28th Division, Pennsylvania Air National Guard, present a certificate of appreciation to depot commander Col. Ron Alberto. From left, Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Urban, Alberto, Lt. Col. Michael Konzman, battalion commander, and Master Sgt. Douglas Congdon, maintenance noncommissioned officer in charge. (U.S. Army photo)

"The unit performed exceptionally well and that's a credit to the Soldiers and the other military personnel in the task force," Konzman added. He credited intensive training at Camp Shelby in Mississippi, as well as at the National Training Center, Fort Irwin, Calif., for having the unit prepared for operations in Iraq.

Tobyhanna's assistance in the maintenance arena contributed to that success, he explained.

"Without C4ISR, you don't survive. From helping us obtain parts and batteries to mounts for our radios, the depot support was great."

Tobyhanna employees provided a variety of assistance to the battalion as it prepared to deploy and during

its deployment, said Tim Bucklaw of the Business Management Directorate. Bucklaw, a staff sergeant, was the unit's maintenance shop foreman in Iraq.

The depot provided stencils to label the unit's vehicles, equipment and duffel bags for shipping from the United States to Iraq, offered technical and material support on radio communications, computer systems, Blue Force Tracking, Night Vision devices and IED countermeasures. Depot assistance enabled the unit to place all of its radio installation kits on a variety of vehicles while still in Kuwait.

Depot personnel also helped the

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unit secure excess laptop computers for the unit's Internet café. The café was a major morale booster for the unit's Soldiers, Bucklaw said. Additional mission computer support came directly from depot subject matter experts as well as from the depot's Forward Repair Activities in theater, which provided assistance with laptop computers, supply system ADP and other C4ISR systems.

The depot's DLA representative, Mark Malinak, also provided responsive logistics support to the unit while undergoing training at Camp Shelby, and in Iraq, including securing vehicle tow straps and power steering

pumps that kept vehicles running and helped to retrieve damaged or disabled vehicles. Malinak was formerly the first sergeant with the unit. "Since I was retired and I couldn't go with them, it was the least I could do to make sure they had what they needed," Malinak said.

Michael Gelderman, an equipment cleaner in the Systems Integration and Support Directorate, also deployed with the unit and appreciated the depot's support. "The depot was a great asset. Before the deployment, they assisted the families in getting ID cards for spouses and kids, as well as providing an information resource for the families in regards to benefits and entitlements available

when activated. I was also in contact with Joe Heitman (CPAC Tobyhanna) regarding using some military leave I had built up. He was great, very friendly and helpful."

Tobyhanna Army Depot is the Defense Department's largest center for the repair, overhaul and fabrication of a wide variety of electronics systems and components, from tactical field radios to the ground terminals for the defense satellite communications network. Tobyhanna's missions support all branches of the Armed Forces.

About 4,400 personnel are employed at Tobyhanna, which is located in the Pocono Mountains of northeastern Pennsylvania.

A Different Christmas Poem

(author unknown)

*The embers glowed softly, and in their dim light,
I gazed round the room and I cherished the sight.
My wife was asleep, her head on my chest,
My daughter beside me, angelic in rest.
Outside the snow fell, a blanket of white,
Transforming the yard to a winter delight.
The sparkling lights in the tree I believe,
Completed the magic that was Christmas Eve.
My eyelids were heavy, my breathing was deep,
Secure and surrounded by love I would sleep.
In perfect contentment, or so it would seem,
So I slumbered, perhaps I started to dream.*

*The sound wasn't loud, and it ! wasn't too near,
But I opened my eyes when it tickled my ear.
Perhaps just a cough, I didn't quite know,
Then the sure sound of footsteps outside in the snow.
My soul gave a tremble, I struggled to hear,
And I crept to the door just to see who was near.
Standing out in the cold and the dark of the night,
A lone figure stood, his face weary and tight.*

*A soldier, I puzzled, some twenty years old,
Perhaps a Marine, huddled here in the cold.*

*Alone in the dark, he looked up and smiled,
Standing watch over me, and my wife and my child.*

*"What are you doing?" I asked without fear,
"Come in this moment, it's freezing out here!
Put down your pack, brush the snow from your sleeve,
You should be at home on a cold Christmas Eve!"*

*For barely a moment I saw his eyes shift,
Away from the cold and the snow blown in drifts....*

To the window that danced with a warm fire's light

Then he sighed and he said "Its really all right,

I'm out here by choice. I'm here every night."

*"It's my duty to stand at the front of the line,
That separates you from the darkest of times.*

*No one had to ask or beg or implore me,
I'm proud to stand here like my fathers before me.*

My Gramps died at ' Pearl on a day in December,"

Then he sighed, "That's a Christmas 'Gram always remembers."

My dad stood his watch in the jungles of ' Nam ',

And now it is my turn and so, here I am.

I've not seen my own son in more than a while,

But my wife sends me pictures, he's sure got her smile.

Then he bent and he carefully pulled from his bag,

*The red, white, and blue... an American flag.
I can live through the cold and the being alone,
Away from my family, my house and my home.*

I can stand at my post through the rain and the sleet,

I can sleep in a foxhole with little to eat.

*I can carry the weight of killing another,
Or lay down my life with my sister and brother...*

*Who stand at the front against any and all,
To ensure for all time that this flag will not fall."*

*"So go back inside," he said, "harbor no fright,
Your family is waiting and I'll be all right."*

"But isn't there something I can do, at the least,

"Give you money," I asked, "or prepare you a feast?

*It seems all too little for all that you've done,
For being away from your wife and your son."*

*Then his eye welled a tear that held no regret,
"Just tell us you love us, and never forget.*

To fight for our rights back at home while we're gone,

To stand your own watch, no matter how long.

For when we come home, either standing or dead,

To know you remember we fought and we bled.

Is payment enough, and with that we will trust,

That we mattered to you as you mattered to us."

Belvoir teacher honored for classroom creativity

By Stacy Sneed
Fort Belvoir Eagle Staff writer

Dancing and singing into the hearts of students, Fort Belvoir Elementary School kindergarten teacher Nancy Lexo is creatively enhancing learning in the classroom. Because of her unique approach to teaching, the Wolf Trap Institute for Early Learning Through the Arts in Reston, Va., recently recognized Lexo for her outstanding initiatives with the Wolf Trap Teacher Award.

The Wolf Trap Institute was founded in 1981 and provides arts-in-education services for children ages three to five, their teachers, and their families. Through the “disciplines” of drama, music, and movement they enrich the professional development of teachers; engage young people in active, creative, learning experiences; energize efforts to bring parents together in the classroom; and enliven the atmosphere in the classroom.

Last year, one of the institute’s teachers, Michelle Valeri, joined Lexo to develop a learning program for Lexo’s integrated classroom (special needs and general education students).

“It’s such a neat and wonderful program,” Lexo said excitedly. “I always wanted to be a part of the program, so when I got the opportunity, I jumped at it.

“It’s such a great connection with the special needs kids and all the children involved. It’s something about the music that’s repetitive that the students enjoy.”

Lexo, who has been in education for 20 years and at Fort Belvoir Elementary for five years, said Valeri

taught her a way to be a bit more creative with her students. Valeri would come to the classroom for about 30 minutes and do actual lessons and lesson plans, but with a story or possibly even a song.

“This experience was a like a training program for me, too,” said Lexo. “It was sort of a lesson with musical instruments, showing the kids how they could get involved in storytelling, how to do dramatic reenactments of stories, and just how to make learning fun with the use of props and such.”

She said the most interesting thing was learning to connect with her autistic children and reaching out to them through music.

“The autistic children communicate differently. It’s more like a communication disorder ... how they hear sounds and their sensory perception is different,” Lexo explained. “It’s a social disorder ... they have their own world. But this program is a way for them to connect. Even my little boy in the wheelchair participated. It’s just something about the music that gets people to the core. It meant a lot to the students and it was on their level.”



Nancy Lexo reminds student Zachary Simons to leave room for writing below his drawing.
(Photo by Marny Malin)

Within just a few months Valeri could see Lexo’s obvious dedication, love, and the creative way she connected with her students. Soon, Lexo’s name was chosen amongst 200 participants with only 20 people receiving awards. Only a few of those 20 were teachers from Fairfax County.

Lexo displays her award in her Fort Belvoir Elementary kindergarten classroom as a reminder of what she can achieve and how she can make learning fun for all her students.

Integrated health care is on the horizon

By Melina Rodriguez
Fort Belvoir Eagle Staff writer

Base Realignment and Closure is bringing more than a shift in jobs to the National Capital Area; it's also bringing a change in where and how the area's 86,000 enrolled military health care beneficiaries receive treatment.

The new 900,000 square foot DeWitt Health Care Network complex will be located on what is now Fort Belvoir's South 9 Golf Course, according to Dr. Richard Repeta, director of DeWitt's Integration and Transition Office.

"BRAC and integration — you hear those terms a lot, but what I want to make sure is that folks have an understanding of what the difference is between BRAC and integration," said Repeta during the BRAC and Integration Road Show presentation on Friday.

The presentation was directed at hospital employees in order inform them of the most current information about BRAC, integration and their effects on the hospital.

"BRAC is building the buildings; we're spending \$1.5 billion to take four hospitals and make them into two ... that's BRAC. It's the brick and mortar," he said.

Malcolm Grow Medical Center, DeWitt Army Community Hospital, National Navy Medical Center in Bethesda and Walter Reed Army Medical Center will become two hospitals located in Bethesda, Md. and Fort Belvoir.

"How do they have common business practices? How do they take care of patients? Do they even look the same on the inside? That's integration. As you can imagine that's a lot



Dr. Richard Repeta, director of integration and transition, DeWitt Health Care Network, briefs DeWitt employees on the latest BRAC and integration plans. (Photo by Anne M. Brink)

more challenging," Repeta continued.

BRAC was announced in May 2005 and involves the realignment of Fort Belvoir. One major part of the change is enlarging DeWitt and integrating it into not only an Army hospital, but a joint military hospital, including Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps.

BRAC will bring about 22,000 new workers to Fort Belvoir, 3,000 of those people will work at the DeWitt Health Care Network complex.

"One of the things we would like to get out of today is how we can best communicate with you ... because things are going to change over the next five years," Repeta said.

DeWitt will be transformed from a 45-bed facility to a 120-bed hospital. It will have a 10-bed intensive care unit and 10 operating rooms. It will serve approximately 90 inpatients a day, which is a 500 percent increase from the current 20.

Other additions include a Level II nursery, nuclear medicine and radiation therapy.

"Cancer care is not something that we've done here, so now being able to provide cancer care to patients in the southern part of the National Capital Area is a very exciting prospect," Repeta said. "[Patients are] not going to have to go to Walter Reed to get their chemotherapy and then have to drive all the way back to Woodbridge."

The design process for the new hospital will take more than a year, and construction is expected to take around two years.

"This is an exceptionally fast time frame for building this hospital and that is why these processes — the design, the construction, all of these elements — are going on concurrently," said Repeta.

During the presentation Repeta also discussed possible changes that

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Top Fort Monmouth civilian receives DOD's highest civilian honor

By Elizabeth M. Lorge
Fort Monmouth Public Affairs Office

The DoD saluted Fort Monmouth's top civilian, Victor Ferlise, deputy to the commanding general for Operations and Support for the Communications-Electronics Lifecycle Management Command (C-E LCMC), with its highest civilian honor, the Distinguished Civilian Service Award, in a Pentagon ceremony Nov. 9.

The award was presented by Deputy Secretary of Defense Gordon England.

The Distinguished Civilian Service Award recognizes "outstanding DoD civilian employees whose careers reflect exceptional devotion to duty and extremely significant contributions of a broad scope to the efficiency, economy or other improvement in the operation of the DoD," according to the award description.

Serving as deputy to the commanding general since 1992, Ferlise is responsible for six of the C-E LCMC's main business units, including the Logistics and Readiness Center, the Acquisition Center and the Software Engineering Center.

Under his oversight, the command has reduced acquisition cycle time by 60 percent and saved more than \$93 million due to reduced costs and streamlined acquisition techniques.

Ferlise has provided critical supply support to Soldiers deployed in support of Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom.

Among his notable achievements is that he provided personal supervision for the Firefinder radar program in Southwest Asia, resulting in unprecedented system readiness.

Firefinder is an artillery-locating, radar system credited with saving the lives of warfighters by virtually neutralizing enemy artillery fire.

Ferlise has also worked on acquisition projects for the DoD, including a congressionally-mandated Section 912 Cross Service Study Group.

The study developed the Rapid Response to Critical Systems Requirements Contract, which allows the rapid acquisition of a wide range of technical and support services.

It was used to provide security services for the Coalition Provisional Authority in Baghdad in less than 10 days.

He was also a member of the Source Selection Advisory Council for all 10 of the design-build contracts awarded under Iraqi Infrastructure Reconstruction with a total value of \$10 billion.

"Vic Ferlise has provided exceptional service to this command, the Army and the nation,"

C-E LCMC Commanding General Maj. Gen. Michael Mazzucchi said. "By streamlining acquisition processes he has saved millions of taxpayer dollars and ensured timely delivery of critical, life-saving equipment and technology to Soldiers serving in the Global War on Terrorism. I'm delighted to see him recognized for his efforts."

Ferlise entered federal service in 1971 here. He previously served as the chief counsel here, and was appointed to the Senior Executive Service in 1983.

He holds a Bachelor of Science in Engineering from Newark College of Engineering, now the New Jersey Institute of Technology, a Juris Doctor from Temple University School of Law and a Masters of Business Administration from Fairleigh Dickinson University.

During his career, Ferlise has earned other prestigious civilian awards and decorations, including the Army's top civilian honor, the Decoration for Exceptional Civilian Service, and three Senior Executive Service Presidential Rank Awards.

He is also a recipient of the 2002 Roger Jones Award for outstanding Executive Leadership in the Federal Sector from American University, and was the 2003 Distinguished Alumnus of New Jersey Institute of Technology.

NCMA recognizes Picatinny employee's accomplishments

By Marion Doyle
The Picatinny Voice

PICATINNY ARSENAL, N.J. — The National Contract Management Association recently selected Picatinny employee Lori Deara to receive the 2006 James E. Cravens Award for Outstanding Membership Accomplishments.

The award is designed to recognize NCMA chapters and individual members for outstanding membership accomplishments during the past NCMA program year.

It is intended to highlight achievements in membership recruitment and retention.

Deara is currently the group director for the Maneuver Ammunition Systems Group, Picatinny Center for Contracting and Commerce.

She entered federal service in 1993 and has been a member of NCMA since 1994.

She is a certified federal contracts



Lori Deara, winner of the National Contract Management Association's 2006 James E. Cravens Award for Outstanding Membership Accomplishments. (Courtesy photo)

manager, and has been the contracting officer on such programs as the Advanced Infrared Countermeasure Munitions program that consists of the XM211 and XM212 decoys, the

105mm High Explosive-Tactical and Target Practice-Tracer cartridges in support of the Stryker Mobile Gun System and the 120mm M829A2 Armor-Piercing, Fin-Stabilized, Discarding Sabot - Traced cartridge in support of the Abrams tank.

She is a three-time past president and national director of the Picatinny Chapter of NCMA and is currently on the chapter's board of advisors.

Deara currently holds a bachelor's degree from Seton Hall University and is Level-3 Certified in Contracting, Level-1 Certified in Logistics and Level-1 Certified in Program Management.

She is a past recipient of NCMA's Albert Berger Award and the Northeast Regions Spot Light Award.

Deara is a dedicated advocate to the mentor and protégé program here at Picatinny. She is also a mentor for NCMA's New Leadership Development Program.

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will begin before the new medical center is built.

"What we're starting to think about is how we can ramp up our services now to approximate the care level that we may be providing in the future, so that it's not [as much] a shift in the scope of services [as] a shift in the volume," added Repeta.

He also discussed the effects on the surrounding community and the

possible solutions that the garrison is considering.

"Traffic is going to be an issue, we know that because Route 1 is packed already and we're going to put a hospital on here that is three times the size of the one that we have now," Repeta said.

"One of the thoughts about what we're going to do to try and alleviate that congestion is actually build a bridge from Pence Gate over Route 1 and onto the other side of post so

that people can access the hospital without having to cross Route 1," he said.

Following the presentation the audience was asked to fill out a survey to determine the best way to communicate these upcoming changes to the employees.

"Eventually we'd like to get to where everything is seamless, everything is the same. It's easier on the patients, it's easier on the staff and it's more cost effective," said Repeta.

APG families invited to White House Christmas Party

By Ann Wamack APG MWR

Four families from Aberdeen Proving Ground received an extraordinary holiday invitation recently — President and Mrs. Bush invited them to a Christmas party at the White House on Dec. 4. The invitations were extended to children (ages 6 through 12) of service members who were deployed or had recently been deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom (Iraq) or Operation Enduring Freedom (Afghanistan).

The invitees were: Daylin Armstead and his mother Tonya Armstead, Sidney Paulson and her father SFC Richard Paulson, Caitlyn Wamack and her mother Ann Wamack, and Rachel Wilson and her mother Anne Wilson. Also included in the invitation were Rita Wilkins as a representative of Northeast Region and Renee Main from Edgewood Youth Center. Each child was invited to bring one parent.

The day of the party, the APG families boarded the bus at 6:15 a.m. outside the Aberdeen Youth Center leaving shortly thereafter for the Fort Myer Child Development Center. There, after verifying the guest list, the APG families were joined by other Northeast Region families including Walter Reed, Ft. Meade and other installations. Several protocol briefings later, the families boarded two busses, and were taken from Arlington, Va. through the “VIP” entrance of the White House grounds where they received several additional protocol briefings and security screenings before being allowed to enter the White House.

Once inside, live piano music greeted the families as they were allowed to roam freely around the public areas of the White House. Frosty the Snowman and Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer greeted the children,

and Santa himself was seated in front of a magnificent Christmas tree in the Blue Room. Families from other regions of the nation were also present totaling approximately 150 people, evenly split between parents and children. Cookies and light refreshments including frosted cookies in the shape



President George W. Bush and Mrs. Laura Bush sit with children of deployed U.S. military personnel and watch a performance of “Willy Wonka” by members of The Kennedy Center Education Department in the East Room Monday, Dec. 4, 2006. (White House photo by Eric Draper)

“President Bush and I are proud of each and every one of you. I know that you all support your moms and dads and you’re always there for them when they need your help, and I want to thank you all, each one of you, for doing that.”

— Laura Bush

of the First Family pets were served in the State Dining Room. Although the Christmas decorations throughout were dazzling, perhaps the one of the most spectacular was the gingerbread replica of the White House; and on it’s roof were Santa in his sleigh and his reindeer.

About 10:30 a.m., the guests were

invited into the East Room where a small stage had been constructed. The children sat on the rug in front of the stage, while the President and Mrs. Bush sat on a small bench. As he greeted the group, the President thanked all the children for their strength and reminded them that the service of their parents was important to the country. The morning’s entertainment was an abbreviated preview version of “Willie Wonka and the Chocolate Factory” which enthralled the children with its music and dance.

After the play Mrs. Bush left promptly for another engagement but the President remained behind to shake hands and pose for photos with the guests.

Vietnam veterans share history with middle-schoolers

by Elizabeth M. Lorge
Public Affairs Office

Three members of the Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 12 recently spent the day at Thompson Middle School, Middletown, in honor of Veterans Day. They demonstrated equipment and artifacts from their days in Vietnam and explained what the war was really like to students.

Fort employee Don Davison, Chapter President Dennis Beauregard and Ernest DiOrio, have given presentations to local schools for over a decade, although Thompson is their “main” school.

Founded in 1987, Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 12 is the oldest chapter in New Jersey and the twelfth chapter in the country. Davison is one of five founding members.

In their presentation, they explained what it was like to go to war at age 18 or 19. At 20, Davison was the oldest man in his squad; his Soldiers called him “Pops.”

DiOrio left for Vietnam on Thanksgiving Day and remembers feeling: “Scared. Alone. I was by myself,” he said. “When you first get on that plane and you leave your family behind— you never knowing if you’ll come back again—that’s one of the hardest things that you can do. And when I got to Vietnam, I didn’t know what was going to happen. I was afraid, alone, and anybody who tells you they weren’t afraid is crazy.”

“I was nervous, afraid; I had no one to talk to,” agreed Davison. “You’re alone, and you feel like you’re by yourself until you get to know the other guys. Once you got to know them, then that kind of took some of the anxiety out.”

They described what life was like in the jungle for weeks and months, never

knowing if the villagers they helped by day would attack them at night, the most dangerous time to be in the field, according to the men.

Davison, a staff sergeant at the time and squad leader, reminisced about tying a rope to all his men’s legs at night and periodically yanking it to make sure someone was awake on guard duty to warn them of attacks.

“My challenge over there was to make sure that the guys I had with me on my team came back in one piece and that we did what had to get done and did it right. A lot of people went over there thinking it was a holiday and that type of thing. I went over with the same aspect, that I was going to win the war and after you see it over there, you change real quick,” he said.

Injured and evacuated to Japan after six months in Vietnam, Beauregard said his biggest challenge was simply “to survive.”

“You lose your friends,” added DiOrio. “You see people getting wounded, killed and thinking, you know, am I next? When you come in country, the first 30 days is when you get hurt because you’re ‘green,’ and you’re afraid. And your last 30 days in country is when you get hurt because now you’re being cautious because you want to get home and that’s when you can get yourself hurt or killed.”

The three veterans also described eating C- rations that dated from before World War II. Each case of rations (12 meals) contained a packet of pound cake and a can of fruit.

Davison said he collected these treats from his men and gave them to Soldiers on their birthdays.

The men also let students hold artifacts from Vietnam, including bamboo drinking classes, utensils made

from water buffalo ribs, cross-bows, blank ammunition, and radios.

They compared the 32-pound radio (35 with battery and carried like a backpack) to modern cell phones.

The radio, with a six-foot antenna, had a range of only 22 miles, so squads used relay stations to get enemy information to their units. By the time commanders could act on intelligence from the field, it was often obsolete.

They invited students to carry the radio while wearing a field helmet. Many staggered under the weight. Soldiers in the field, according to the veterans, were also required to carry a 120-140 pound rucksack, two cans of machine gun ammunition, ammunition for their own weapons, rations and a minimum of four canteens of water.

Although Davison, Beauregard and DiOrio didn’t meet until joining the Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 12 in the late 1980s and early 1990s, they share many common experiences and consider themselves brothers.

“We went over as boys and strangers and came back as brothers and men,” said Beauregard.

All three say they joined the organization and speak to students as an outlet for dealing with their war experiences and ensuring future generations know the truth about Vietnam.

“When I came back,” said DiOrio, “it was like a dream because one day you’re in the jungle and the next thing, you’re back in the United States. We didn’t have a chance to say, well, let me stay a week or two in an area with other people. They just put you back in the population. As a Vietnam veteran, when we came home, we didn’t speak about this.”

“Today’s information that goes out

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to these kids isn't accurate," said Davison. "The history books don't cover what really happened over there and the best way to get the information out is to have it from people who were actually there. You get the experience from

the guys that were there, and as you see, it's good for us anyway. We help each other.

"And we enjoy doing it and we get the kids involved. That's the big thing. As long as they understand what we did and why we did it. Most of the books that are written today aren't written by

vets. They're written by people who never served a day in the military."

All three say they are committed to ensuring that no veteran ever returns from war to face the hate and blame they experienced. Their organization also wants to identify all Vietnam veterans who remain missing in action.

Tunnel to Towers: Dix team joins New York remembrance run

Shawn Morris

Fort Dix Public Affairs Staff

Five years have passed since the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks against the United States touched off what has come to be known as the Global War on Terrorism.

For the Fort Dix Soldiers who attended the Fifth Annual Firefighter Stephen Siller Tunnel to Towers Run in lower Manhattan Sept. 24, the roots of that ongoing war could be seen sprouting from the chasm where the World Trade Center's twin towers once stood.

One of these Soldiers, Sgt. Charles Gaglio, has participated in the run each of the four years Fort Dix has sent a team. For this Bronx native, returning to Ground Zero is a painful, yet uplifting, homecoming.

"The day that we go is not visiting a hole in the ground; it's a day of remembrance, of celebration," explained Gaglio, who first ran in the second annual Tunnel to Towers run in 2003.

"The first time there was the greatest response from the public," he said. "This year, of course, is special to me because my son did it."

Gaglio's nine-year-old son Paul ran in formation with his father and the rest of the Fort Dix team for the entire 5-kilometer course.

"He was yelling cadence and clapping his hands the whole way," said Gaglio, the post's HHC supply sergeant. "He's just a ball of energy."



The Fort Dix team that ran in Manhattan

(Photo courtesy of Fort Dix Public Affairs Office)

Gaglio and the entire Fort Dix team showed a lot of energy as they, along with thousands of other participants, followed in the footsteps of New York City Firefighter Stephen Siller. Siller was off-duty in the Bronx when he learned of the terrorist attacks against the World Trade Center.

Siller grabbed his gear, ran through the Brooklyn-Battery Tunnel into lower Manhattan, and entered the towers, never to be heard from again.

This annual run retraces his steps, beginning on the Brooklyn side of

the tunnel and finishing at Ground Zero.

Following the run, participants and guests are treated to entertainment, complimentary food and drink, and visits by famous speakers such as actors John Turturro and Tony Danza, baseball legend Bobby White, and former New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani.

For Gaglio, it's an event no Soldier should miss.

"It's something that they should experience at least once," he said. "It's almost like you owe it to yourself to do that."



Walter Reed Soldiers welcomed in Brooklyn

A parade (below) down 3rd Avenue in Bay Ridge honored visiting Soldiers from Walter Reed Hospital recently. Their visit was made possible through the Armed Forces 1013 Committee.

The Soldiers from Walter Reed Hospital (left) with the Armed Forces 1013 Committee and event coordinator Theresa Mapes (center.)

(Photos by Cathy Santopietro, Fort Hamilton Public Affairs)



PEARL HARBOR ATTACK ENERGIZES "NISEI"

by Renita Foster

Fort Monmouth Public Affairs Office

Ted Tsukiyama can still hear the radio announcer's voice screaming, "Get off the streets! Get inside! Take cover! Pearl Harbor is being attacked by Japanese planes. This is the real McCoy!"

The blaring news was a drastic contrast to the celebration he'd enjoyed the evening before at his Junior Prom. A Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) Cadet at the University of Hawaii, he'd danced the night away and was peacefully sleeping until awakened by what sounded like Army maneuvers shortly before 8 a.m. on Dec. 7, 1941.

Military training tactics had become a normal routine throughout the Island of Oahu, but this time the constant thunder didn't stop. Tsukiyama finally roused himself up and headed out doors to take a look.

From his house in the east, he could see the horizon in the west suffocated by thick, black clouds, punctuated by white bursts of smoke. Somewhat alarmed, Tsukiyama switched on the radio.

"That's when I hear the broadcaster yelling that Japanese planes are bombing Pearl Harbor," said Tsukiyama. "I immediately realized those were anti-air craft guns, and this was indeed the 'real McCoy.'"

Learning his homeland was being attacked had Tsukiyama in shock. Finding out the invaders were Japanese left him numb. But there was little time for wonder and explanations as the announcer instructed all servicemen to return immediately to their posts. All university ROTC cadets were to report to the school armory.

As 1st Sgt. of Bravo Company, Tsukiyama knew time was crucial and scrambled to get in uniform. To his relief, no enemy planes appeared during the 10



The Attack on Pearl Harbor — In less than three hours, Japanese planes crippled the U.S. Pacific fleet. At 7:58 A.M., the alarm went out: "Air raid, Pearl Harbor. This is not drill!" Later that morning, the magazine of the USS Shaw exploded after being struck by a Japanese bomb.

(National Archives)

minute ride to the school. Present for duty within an hour of the attack, the responding cadets were issued a 1903 Springfield rifle - five bullets, bolt action. The fact that Tsukiyama and 80% of the ROTC students were Nisei (second generation Japanese Americans), made no difference to him or the ROTC staff. There were no questions or challenges to loyalty when they reported in.

The cadets' first orders were to deploy at the back of the university and establish a defense line following a report Japanese paratroopers were landing on the ridge behind the school. Determined to stop the advance of enemy troops into the city, the ROTC students crouched in the bushes at the bottom of the hill. For nearly five hours they waited in the hot sun for what turned out to be a false

sighting; just one example of many panic-stricken rumors that spread over Honolulu that day.

"We believed that the enemy was there and were horrified at what might happen in the next few minutes. But we were not worried about being Nisei," emphasized Tsukiyama. "We were treated just like any other Soldier or sailor reporting for duty."

Later that afternoon, the Territorial Governor mobilized the ROTC unit to the Hawaii Territorial Guard. The cadets were now Soldiers. For the next six weeks, they stood ready to protect and defend the city of Honolulu.

"In 1977, the University of Hawaii

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Army ROTC was awarded a World War II Battle Streamer,” said Tsukiyama proudly. “It was the first and only ROTC unit deployed to combat the enemy on Dec. 7, 1941 and the only ROTC unit in the United States to receive military recognition.”

Like all American Soldiers in uniform, Tsukiyama and his fellow Nisei felt proud to be serving their country in time of need. But in the early morning hours of January 19th 1942, that abruptly changed. At precisely 3 a.m., the 317 Nisei service members were awakened and informed all service members with Japanese ancestry were being discharged. Tsukiyama clearly recalled the tearfully given order that eliminated most of the Soldiers. Left were Hawaiian, Caucasian, Chinese, Korean, and Filipino; young men who had been together all their lives, attending the same schools, playing sports, and training for service in the armed forces with no idea there were

supposed to be enemies.

“Everyone cried when we parted,” said Tsukiyama, still feeling the painful memory 65 years later. “Our country was in need of man power and yet, we’re declared useless and unwanted! America was the only country we knew. None of us had been to Japan, many didn’t speak the language, or had any relationship whatsoever with Japan. How could they question our loyalty?!”

Tsukiyama also described the moment of suddenly being told he was not an American and that he couldn’t be trusted as one, as the lowest point in life he’s ever known.

Unsure of what to do about the situation, Tsukiyama returned to school. A few weeks later, Hung Wai Ching, University YMCA secretary, inspired Tsukiyama and the rest of the Nisei with a suggestion. Maybe they were ineligible for military service as enemy aliens and couldn’t be trusted as Soldiers, but surely there was something these Nisei could do

to demonstrate their love and support for their country.

Convinced now was the time to show who they were and where they stood, a petition was sent to the military governor that read, “Hawaii is our home; the United States our country. We know but one loyalty and this is to the Stars and Stripes. We wish to do our part as loyal Americans in every way possible, and we hereby offer ourselves for whatever service you may see fit to use us.” One hundred sixty-nine Nisei signed the document.

As a result, The “Varsity Victory Volunteers (VVV)” was established on February 23, 1942 and assigned to the 34th Combat Engineers Regiment at Schofield Barracks. Divided into 12 work gangs such as carpentry, mechanic, laborer and kitchen, the VVV worked directly alongside the 34th. Projects in-

cluded constructing buildings, furniture, roads, stringing miles of barbed wire, and quarrying several tons of rocks. While they were authorized to live in Army barracks, eat Army chow, and receive less than \$90 a month, uniforms and rank were forbidden. Dungarees became their official clothes instead. By the end of the year, the VVV Nisei were ready for something else

Tsukiyama believes the meaningful contributions made by the VVV may have helped change attitudes toward the Nisei, as well as a chance visit by John J. McCloy, Assistant Secretary of War. While inspecting Oahu, McCloy was briefed about the VVV, the university students who had given up their education to serve their country. The following month, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, announced the creation of an all exclusive Nisei combat unit. The VVV immediately requested deactivation so its members could enlist in the 442nd Regimental Combat Team (RCT) activated on Feb. 1, 1943.

Following a farewell ceremony by the Honolulu Community for over 2,500 Nisei volunteers, the new recruits reported for training at Camp Shelby, Mississippi. Tsukiyama acknowledges there were some problems, even some fighting between the 442nd and their Caucasian counterparts, but that eventually it was realized “we were American as apple pie.” After basic training, Tsukiyama transferred to the Military Intelligence Service (MIS) as a Japanese linguist and served with MIS in the Burma-India Theater.

Sixty five years after the attack on Pearl Harbor, Tsukiyama is still saddened at the treatment of the Nisei at the outset of the war. “You are born, raised, and educated in an American community just like any other American kid. Yet, because you look different and have a different name, when the enemy is people of your ancestry, there’s a problem with anyone from that race,” said Tsukiyama. “It was a great misfortune that day I was forced out of the Guard because I was an American and loved my country just as much as anyone else.”

(Editor’s note: This is the first article in a series about the Nisei (second generation Japanese Americans) during World War II.)



Ted Tsukiyama served in the “Varsity Victory Volunteers” after being discharged from the Hawaii Territorial Guard for being a Nisei (second generation Japanese). Today he is the Historian for MIS Hawaii and 442nd Regimental Combat Team in Hawaii. (Photo courtesy of Ted Tsukiyama)

AROUND THE ARMY

Army's future force closer to reality

ARNEWS

The Army recently took delivery of the firing platform for a new cannon artillery system that will reduce battlefield risk to Soldiers, while meeting an essential Army modernization requirement.

The firing platform was unveiled at BAE Systems' Land and Armaments division in Minneapolis, Minn. and will be transferred this month to Yuma Proving Ground in Arizona for field testing. The firing platform is part of the Army's new Future Combat Systems (FCS) Non-Line-of-Sight-Cannon artillery system.

"The Army's future force is fast becoming a reality today," said Maj. Gen. Charles Cartwright, Future Combat Systems program manager. "This latest piece of hardware is tangible proof that FCS technologies are maturing on schedule, in accordance with Army plans and expectations. The true beneficiaries of these new capabilities will be our Soldiers."

Future Combat Systems is the Army's primary modernization program, and is the Army's first major modernization in almost four decades.

Future Combat Systems will provide Soldiers with near real-time situational awareness by using an advanced electronic network to integrate 18 new manned and unmanned air and ground systems. Future Combat Systems will increase the ability of Soldiers to handle the variety of missions they face every day, provide greater

protection, and increase combat capabilities throughout the operational force.

Soldiers are already testing and fielding components of Future Combat Systems right now in Iraq and Afghanistan; and next year, Soldiers of the Evaluation Brigade Combat Team will begin testing FCS technologies and tactics at Fort Bliss, Texas.

The plan calls for 15 Brigade Combat Teams with the full suite of Future Combat Systems; and all other Brigade Combat Teams having some Future Combat Systems capabilities.

The Non-Line-of-Sight-Cannon will give the Army a key capability that it currently lacks: a cannon artillery system that is fully automated, highly mobile, and capable of launching multiple rounds precisely on target simultaneously.

Moreover, unlike the Army's current artillery systems, the Non-Line-of-Sight-Cannon will be fully integrated into an advanced electronic network shared by Soldiers on the battlefield. This will make the Non-Line-of-Sight-Cannon much more responsive to Soldier mission requirements.

The Non-Line-of-Sight-Cannon also will help to minimize Soldier risk; because it will be much more mobile and deployable than the Army's current-day artillery systems, which employ 1960s-era design technology. Reducing risk is a huge dividend of Future Combat Systems technology overall.

Providing Soldiers with near real time situational awareness before they encounter

potentially risky or deadly situations will save Soldiers' lives. An Unmanned Aerial Vehicle will identify for Soldiers if there's a sniper in the next alleyway or cavern. An Unmanned Ground Vehicle will help to dispose of an improvised explosive device or roadside bomb.

The firing platform will lead to delivery of early Non-Line-of-Sight-Cannon prototypes in 2008.

The early prototype Non-Line-of-Sight-Cannon is the first of eight Future Combat Systems Manned Ground Vehicles.

The FCS Manned Ground Vehicles will have 75-80 percent commonality stemming from a common chassis and other common components.

The common components include a lightweight band track and a hybrid-electric propulsion system, which maximizes power and fuel efficiency. The Manned Ground Vehicles will be at least as survivable as current Army vehicles and, in most likely operational scenarios, considerably more survivable and capable than anything now in the Army's inventory.

The Army already has fired more than 2,000 rounds from the Non-Line-of-Sight-Cannon System Demonstrator at Yuma. The firing platform unveiled today includes a cannon assembly that is 1,200 pounds lighter than the M777 cannon used on the Non-Line-of-Sight-Cannon Concept Technology Demonstrator.

"Technological advances are enabling our Army to achieve greater capabilities

with less mass and weight," Cartwright said. "Future Combat Systems is about making our Army more agile and more strategically deployable, while increasing lethality, survivability and tactical mobility. The Non-Line-of-Sight-Cannon is an integral part of our Army modernization efforts."

America Supports You

'Overhauled' Humvee benefits Fisher House

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, – CNN is putting an overhauled Humvee that saw action during the war in Iraq on the auction block and will donate the proceeds to the Fisher House Foundation.

Nicknamed "Warrior One," the Humvee will be the subject of an upcoming episode of "Overhaulin'," a highly rated program on The Learning Channel. The program's co-hosts, Chris Jacobs and Adrienne "A.J." Janic, and hot rod designer Chip Foose presented the refurbished Humvee to CNN employees.

After Warrior One tours military bases and other sites across the country, the Barrett-Jackson Auction Co., a classic car auction house, will auction the vehicle Jan. 20 at its headquarters in Scottsdale, Ariz.

"The crew from 'Overhaulin'" has created a memorable tribute to military personnel who serve during times of war and the journalists who cover them," said Jim

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Walton, president of CNN Worldwide. "We feel the Fisher House - with its mission to support military families during times of medical need - is an ideal recipient for the proceeds raised by the auction."

Fisher Houses provide temporary residences for families of patients receiving major medical care at military and Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers. Since its founding in 1991, Fisher Houses have offered more than two million days of lodging to more than 100,000 families. Presently, the organization operates 33 houses in 16 states, plus two houses in Europe.

"We are delighted to learn of CNN's efforts to honor America's heroes - its servicemen and women wounded in the global war on terrorism," Ken Fisher, chairman of the Fisher House Foundation, said. "The visibility that will result from this initiative will help Americans understand the selfless sacrifices of the men and women who risk their lives to defend and protect us."

The Fisher House Foundation is a member of America Supports You, a Defense Department program that highlights ways Americans and the corporate sector support the nation's military.

CNN purchased the vehicle in 2002 from the King Humvee dealership in Kuwait. Network producers, video journalists and correspondents used the vehicle in 2003 when they were embedded with the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, in Iraq. In April of that year, the vehicle came under heavy fire near Baghdad as Iraqis celebrated the arrival of coalition forces in the city.

This summer, "Overhauled"

took the Humvee to the show's workshop in Irvine, Calif., where crews overhauled the Humvee's engine and body and installed an extensive entertainment system that includes a DVD player, four LCD monitors and a state-of-the-art sound system.

Airbrush artists Dru Blaier, Mickey Harris and Mike Lavalley painted images of journalists and military men and women onto the vehicle as a tribute to those who served during the war in Iraq or covered the war.

Soldiers want to do mission, go home

by Spc. Todd Selge
5th Battalion, 20th Infantry
Regiment (for ARNEWS)

WASHINGTON - When you hear news about the war in Iraq you usually hear it from a high-level Army spokesperson or you hear the media describe it as "another deadly day." The view on the ground from the Soldier's perspective is often overlooked.

We are the ones who live the conflict every day, who see the progress day-to-day. We are the ones who experience the sorrows, who interact with the people, and who see the enemy's effort to undo every good thing the Iraqi people and coalition forces have done.

What every Soldier wants is to succeed in our mission and go home to our families. The things we do each day allow us the ability to do just that.

My unit, 3rd Platoon, Company A, 5th Battalion, 20th Infantry, has seen many successes.

The most important is getting the Iraqi security forces organized and capable of handling every problem that

may arise in the future. Accomplishing this happens on all levels, from the commanders down to the average private.

We have a training program through which Iraqi Army soldiers learn the same basic tasks every U.S. Army Soldier knows.

The American Soldiers develop friendships with the Iraqi soldiers and police. We joke, eat, talk about family and conduct missions together. Every day, Soldiers are working hand-in-hand with Iraqis, teaching them to succeed in their jobs.

Since we have been here, the Iraqi security forces have been the main effort finding countless caches, killing or capturing anti-Iraqi personnel and thwarting attacks targeted at coalition forces. They continue to undermine the enemy and gain the confidence of their fellow countrymen.

We are also building important and long-lasting relationships with the residents of surrounding communities. We go to schools and neighborhoods giving the kids backpacks full of supplies, handing out candy and hearing the concerns of the people.

We ask about their basic services, such as food, water, electricity and fuel. We hand out cards with hotline numbers to address any problems, and we share handshakes.

We see the smiles of a hopeful generation and we see the efforts of the anti-Iraqi forces (AIF) to shatter these dreams. There has been a major effort by AIF to sell and hand out a wide variety of realistic-looking toy guns.

The AIF's hope is for the Iraqi army and coalition forces to engage the children, but with constant training and the

help of the communities, we will yet again foil their plans to promote chaos and hatred.

Every day we interact and help Iraq grow, we are one more day closer to success and one day closer to seeing our families.

What does the average Soldier think every day? He wants to accomplish the mission. He wants to see the smiles of the Iraqi people last. He is grateful for everything he has back home and he wishes the very same freedom he is fighting for upon the country of Iraq.

Agency takes scholarship applications

by Bonnie Powell, ARNEWS

FORT LEE, Va. - Gas prices are biting into the family budget, interest rates are rising and college tuition is outpacing inflation. But, relief is in sight for military families as the 2007 Scholarships for Military Children program opens.

Applications for the \$1,500 scholarships are available at 264 commissaries worldwide, or can be downloaded at www.commissaries.com, www.militaryscholar.org, or www.dodea.edu.

"Scholarships for Military Children is a wonderful military community program," said Patrick Nixon, Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA) director and chief executive officer. "Nearly 3,000 scholarships totaling over \$4 million have been awarded since the first awards were given in 2001."

The \$1,500 scholarships are available for children of military active-duty, retired,

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The making of Army Strong

By Col. Thomas Nickerson,
U.S. Army Accessions Command

WASHINGTON (Army News Service) - The Army's new advertising campaign began with the launch of three television ads Nov. 9, just before Veterans Day.

"Army Strong," a 30- and 60-second English-language spot, showcases powerful images from the lives of Soldiers. "Interview," a 30-second English-language spot, and "Entrevista," a 30-second Spanish-language spot, feature the story and transformation of a Soldier through his and his parents' own words.

Army Strong is inspired by the heart of the Army: the Soldier, according to Jonathan Cranin, creative director for McCann Worldgroup, the Army's marketing communications agency.

To identify the defining character of today's Soldiers and the motivations of tomorrow's Soldiers, McCann Worldgroup held in-depth research among future Soldiers and their influencers, and interacted with hundreds of current Soldiers. The creative team also took part in a three-day mini basic combat training at Fort Jackson, S.C.

"This allowed us, if only for 80 hours, to stand in the boots of American Soldiers," said Cranin, who said those experiences led to the



There's strong... And then there's Army Strong.
(Photo by Ian Collins)

naming of "Army Strong" as the theme for the new ads.

"Army Strong tested extremely well in research, garnering some of the most positive feedback among prospective Soldiers that the Army has seen in years. The feedback was that this campaign - this brand of strength - provided a powerful and distinctive

insight into what the Army offers its Soldiers," Cranin added.

All uniformed Soldiers in the new ads are real Soldiers.

"No actor could ever authentically convey the power and intensity of an Army Strong Soldier," said Cranin. "That's why every Soldier featured in the new Army Strong advertising campaign is an actual Soldier. While the spots include leading-edge technology and equipment, the focus is on the experiences of Soldiers."

The ads were shot during 14 days of casting calls and in-person interviews with hundreds of Soldiers at Fort Riley, Kan.; Fort Lewis, Wash.; and Camp Pendleton, Ca. Soldiers appearing in the ads were chosen to best represent the careers, skills, experiences and cultural diversity that comprises today's Army, Cranin said.

The original musical score in the ads includes undertones from the 29-member Soldiers Chorus of the U.S. Army Field Band, and is the work of Mark Isham.

The ads were directed by Samuel Bayer, who has produced videos for such artists as Green Day, Rolling Stones, Aerosmith, Sheryl Crow and Metallica. He has also created advertising campaigns for Nike, Coke, Pepsi, Nissan, Lexus and Mountain Dew.

(Continued from page 27)

and Guard and Reserve servicemembers. Most of the funds are donated by manufacturers, brokers and suppliers selling groceries in commissaries, and every dollar donated to the program by industry or the general public goes to fund the scholarships.

The program is administered by the Fisher House Foundation.

A significant number of scholarships, about 10 percent every year, go to high school students at DoD schools overseas. "Every cent that community organizations can mobilize to support college-bound students is an investment in the future," said Joseph Tafoya, director of the DoD Education Activity.

"With college costs soaring, our DoD students and their parents appreciate every available scholarship to help defray the cost, and the scholarships enable many of our families to better afford the tuition and provide an incentive for students to work hard," said Tafoya.

"They also demonstrate that military communities are committed to education and increased opportunities for all students."

The scholarship program has also made inroads to increasing support from the "nonmilitary" community. California high school students sponsoring golf tournaments in 2006 raised thousands of dollars to donate to the program, and already for 2007, a private foundation has made a substantial donation.

"We're excited to see this worthwhile program gaining recognition and funding from the community at large," said Jim Weiskopf, vice president of communications at Fisher House Foundation. "Commissary industry support has been amazing and increased public support can only help ensure that the Scholarships for Military Children program continues to benefit the military community for many years to come."

Donations can be made through the link at militaryscholar.org, the official program Web site.

Applications for 2007, which include an essay on "how and why" the applicant would change an historical event, must be turned in at a commissary by close of business on Feb. 21, 2007. At least one \$1,500 scholarship will be awarded at every commissary location with qualified applicants.

The program is open to unmarried children under the age of 21 (23 if enrolled in school) of military active-duty, Reserve, Guard and retired personnel. Eligibility will be determined using the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) database. Applicants should ensure that they, as well as their sponsor, are enrolled in the DEERS database and have a current identification card.

The applicant must be planning to attend, or already attending, an accredited college or university fulltime in the 2007 fall term, or enrolled in a program of studies designed to transfer directly into a four-year program.

Christmas at Arlington

(Editor's note: A family member forwarded these pictures and brief explanation to me a few days ago. I thought we could all appreciate the beauty and the meaning of the message and photos during this holiday season." ...these wreaths -- some 5,000 -- are donated to Arlington by the Worcester Wreath Co. of Harrington, Maine. The owner, Merrill Worcester, not only provides the wreaths, but covers the trucking expense as well..... He's done this since 1992. Most years, groups of Maine school kids combine an educational trip to DC with this event to help out. Making this even more remarkable is the fact that Harrington is in one the poorest parts of the state.")



Rest easy, sleep well my brothers/Know the line has held, your job is done/Rest easy, sleep well/Others have taken up where you fell, the line has held.
Peace, peace, and farewell...

All-American Bowl attracts high school recruits

By Mary Kate Chambers, ARNEWS

WASHINGTON (Army News Service) - Some 80 high school football players across the country have been selected to participate in one of the Army's highest-profile public-relations events, the U.S. Army All-American Bowl.

The game, to be played Jan. 6 in San Antonio, Texas, is the feature event in a series of outreach activities designed to support Army recruiting efforts.

"This initiative helps the command and the Army maintain their connections with America," said Tom Tiernan, outreach and event marketing chief at U.S. Army Accessions Command.

This year the event drew a crowd of more than 31,000, the largest since the first All-American Bowl in 2002. And with a national television audience the event, intended to help develop leads for recruiters and referrals for Cadet Command, will reach millions of educators, coaches, parents and others who play powerful roles in the lives of young people.

The All-American Bowl opens doors for discussion between recruiters and high school football coaches about what the Army can do for the football players, said Tiernan.

Many football players don't get scholarships and need other opportunities in order to be successful in life, Tiernan said. The All-American Bowl gives recruiters the chance to educate coaches on opportunities available in the Army.

Though the connection between football and the Army may not be an obvious one, sports, like football, actually instill values that are a hallmark of today's Army.

Tiernan compared the players on a football team with an Army squad.

"It's the same as in the Army where a squad comes together and the individuals bring their own skills and talents," Tiernan said. Under the proper leadership, they



Players take the field before a crowd of more than 31,000 for the 2006 U.S. Army All-American Bowl. The 2007 event will be played Jan. 6 in Texas.

(Photo by [SportsLink](#))

become a cohesive team, more powerful than any one individual.

Recruiters distributed 400 player nominations made by football-player recruiters in August, and a selection tour began in September.

Besides on-the-field skills, U.S. Army All-Americans must be high school seniors, eligible to graduate in the spring of the year in which they participate, and in good standing in their schools and communities.

A player in the 2006 bowl, Micah Johnson is a case in point.

Being selected for the bowl was especially meaningful to this linebacker. His father, Lt. Col. Skip Johnson, deployed to Iraq in September 2005. He missed his son's senior season, including the bowl game.

"Even though I wasn't there, I watched part of the game and was there in spirit," the elder Johnson said. He was able to connect with his son through a segment on ESPN, via satellite.

"It was real cool to play in the All-American Bowl," the younger Johnson said.

"I had wanted to play in it because I would be representing the Soldiers and my country."

As a senior at Fort Campbell, Ky., Johnson was one of the nation's top football prospects. He earned his state's "Mr. Football" honor after playing just two years for the school team.

Johnson considered playing college football at Georgia State and the University of Notre Dame, but ultimately chose the University of Kentucky, where his brother, Christian, already was a member of the football team.

Johnson said the environment at the bowl was "intense."

"The atmosphere in San Antonio is big," he said. "All week we got tons of fan support."

Many of the activities included in previous All-American Bowl programs will return in 2007. During pre-game activities last year, veterans of Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom were introduced to the crowd, and Fort Sam Houston Advanced Individual Training Soldiers recited the Soldier's Creed.

Army Vice Chief of Staff Gen. Richard A. Cody enlisted some 100 new recruits, while Gen. William Wallace, the commanding general of Training and Doctrine Command, commissioned two ROTC graduates.

The U.S. Army Field Band participated, and 101st Airborne Division Soldiers rappelled from the Alamodome's rafters to present the game ball to the players.

"The value of bringing these folks from the Army is that it's an opportunity to showcase the Army," said Tiernan.

Leads for potential new recruits are also generated at All-American Bowl-related events, such as a breakfast, awards dinner, cheerleading clinic and what's called the Fan Fiesta.

A band competition held in previous years will also be replaced in 2008 with the U.S. Army All-American Band, with participants selected from each of the 50 states. The change will allow recruiters to reach out to another group of high school students and their parents, Tiernan said.

(Mary Kate Chambers writes for the U.S. Army Recruiting Command.)

Soldiers Media Center will tell Army story better, faster

ARNEWS

WASHINGTON (Army News Service) - The Soldiers Media Center was activated Nov. 9 in a Pentagon ceremony that consolidated the Army's key command information organizations and represents an evolution in how the Army communicates.

The change brought together the producers of www.army.mil, Soldiers magazine, Army News Service, Hometown News Service, Soldiers Radio and Television, and the Army's Armed Forces Radio and Television Service outlets.

"From Soldiers magazine to podcasts to video on the Web, the SMC will get information to those who need it," said Stephanie L. Hoehne, principal deputy director of Army Public Affairs.

The SMC will give Soldiers multiple ways to learn about what is happening in the Army, from changes in pay and policies to the activities and accomplishments of fellow Soldiers, added Hoehne.

News told through weekly installation newspapers can be a week old by the time it reaches audiences. "But we can post that story or photo immediately on the Web. And if video is available, we can use it for a wide range of other products," said Col. Richard Breen, SMC commander. "This enhances public affairs professionals' ability to tell their story lo-



The Soldiers Media Center was activated Nov. 9 in a Pentagon ceremony that consolidated the Army's key command information organizations and represents an evolution in how the Army communicates. (US Army photo)

cally, and also provides them a larger platform."

"What we've not been able to do before is cross-promote our products and information. Now, we will be able to do a television story and send viewers to the magazine article, which is more detailed, or to the Web site, which has links to even more information," he said.

The SMC will use new technologies to share information from headquarters to the field, from the field to headquarters and between field units. "The SMC's biggest strategic advantage will be its ability to share products worldwide," said Breen.

As the top communicators to the Army family, the SMC will promote selected strategic messages.

"The SMC is our production engine for Army Strategic Communication, ensuring that video, print and Web products tell the Army story to our audiences," said Hoehne.

The new organization will incorporate the Army Broadcast Service, which will deactivate in the same ceremony. Established in 1980, ABS has financial and managerial oversight of the Army's Armed Forces Radio and Television Service outlets: AFN Europe, AFN Korea, AFN Honduras and AFN Kwajalein.

"While most people probably aren't impacted by the Army Broadcasting Service as a command, if they've been stationed overseas they've benefited from the products of the Armed Forces Networks that we own and operate, as well as the services provided by AFRTS," Breen said.

"Our audiences will not lose that," he said. "What they gain is more relevant information delivered to them faster and in their preferred formats - Web, print, podcast, broadcast, radio and video podcast."



STAND-TO!

Stand-To: n. Procedures prior to first light to enhance unit security
A daily compendium of news, information, and context for Army leaders.

I WILL ALWAYS PLACE THE MISSION FIRST ★ I WILL NEVER ACCEPT DEFEAT ★ I WILL NEVER QUIT ★ I WILL NEVER LEAVE A FALLEN COMRADE

Utilities Privatization

What is it? Owning and operating utility systems is not a core function of the Department of Defense (DoD). The Army has historically under funded our utilities infrastructure. The Utilities Privatization program seeks to leverage financing and economies of scale by turning over our systems to industry experts who will bring our utilities to industry standards. The intent is to obtain safe, reliable and efficient utility services for Army installations. Privatization also allows installation commanders to focus on core defense missions and functions by relieving them of activities that can be done more efficiently and effectively by others. DoD directed Defense Components to privatize all Service-owned electric, natural gas, water and wastewater utility systems unless security concerns required Federal ownership or privatization was uneconomical. The Army expects to complete the evaluation of our 351 Continental United States systems by September 2011.

What has the Army done? As of September 30, 2006, 118 systems in the United States have been privatized, 158 are uneconomical to privatize, and 75 are under evaluation. Overseas utility systems are generally owned by the host nation and are evaluated using host nation laws and international agreements, and are not included in the DoD Utilities Privatization initiative. Europe has privatized the operations and maintenance of 320 of its 589 utility systems.

What efforts does the Army plan to continue in the future? The Army will continue to evaluate and privatize all utility systems where this is economical. Utility systems that cannot be privatized will be re-capitalized using traditional funding sources such as the Operations & Maintenance and Military Construction appropriations.

Why is this important to the Army? Privatization of such utility systems is important because it results in safe, reliable and efficient utility services for Army installations and relieves installation commanders of activities that can be performed more efficiently and effectively by others and allows them to focus resources on their core missions.

Stationing

What is it? Stationing is the process of combining force structure and installation structure at a specific location to satisfy a specific mission requirement. As such, it includes all forms of realignment or relocation and includes those actions that determine the authorized population (military

and civilian) at a particular installation. Each stationing action is comprised of a force component and an installation component. The force component consists of the personnel (military and civilian) and equipment of an organization. The installation component deals with all the facilities required to support the unit. Both components must be considered as part of the stationing process. The desired end of this process is a force that is based in a manner that ensures effective and efficient mission accomplishment. The ways used to accomplish stationing include transfer, consolidation or relocation of a function, manpower or personnel; activation or inactivation; or reduction or increase of civilian personnel. The means to execute these actions are encompassed in the procedures used to manage directed actions (for example, those actions mandated by Congress, Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC), and discretionary actions resulting from Major Army Command (MACOM) requests, Department of the Army direction, or directed actions requiring additional actions not originally specified).

What has the Army done? Currently, three initiatives are impacting how and where the Army positions units. Although each process is separate and distinct, these programs are designed to work together to enhance Army transformation. These initiatives are:

- * [Integrated Global Presence and Basing Strategy \(IGPBS\)](#)
- * [Army Modular Force \(AMF\)](#)
- * [Base Realignment and Closure 2005 \(BRAC\)](#)

What continued efforts does the Army plan to continue in the future? Stationing actions require various timelines to implement. The longest timeline (5 years) involves planning for and executing major construction in conjunction with a stationing action. The Department of the Army will form panels to meet and discuss how to best execute the stationing requirements due to operational and Congressional requirements.

Why is this important to the Army? Through proper planning and execution stationing saves the Army resources. These savings can then be used to improve the quality of life for our Soldiers and civilian employees.

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Defense Integrated Military Human Resources System (DIMHRS)

What is it? In order to meet the demands of the global war on terrorism and keep pace with the modern war fighter, the Army is transforming how it manages its personnel by preparing for the implementation of the Defense Integrated Military Human Resources System (DIMHRS). DIMHRS will have an impact on every Soldier.

What has the Army done? Significant features of DIMHRS implementation include:

- * DIMHRS leverages commercial off-the-shelf software.
- * OSD has appointed a new Enterprise Program Management Officer. This decision requires the Army to continue implementation of DIMHRS while refining cost and schedule estimates for completion. During January-August 2006, the Army conducted a detailed review of requirements previously assessed as incomplete.
- * In order to communicate this historic transformation to the entire Army community, the Army DIMHRS Team has launched a new AKO page dedicated to keeping Soldiers informed on the progress of the Army DIMHRS program. See link below.
- * The Army Requirements Review validated the program's functional and technical requirements for Army implementation in September 2006.

What efforts does the Army plan to continue in the future? DIMHRS testing is scheduled to begin January 2007; ARNG operational testing (with the Oregon ARNG) will begin October 2007. The Army has projected system deployment beginning April 2008.

Why is this important to the Army? When fully implemented, DIMHRS will be the largest personnel and pay system in the world. With Army National Guard Soldiers deployed all over the globe, the need for an integrated personnel and pay system has never been greater. DIMHRS will be globally accessible at any time, anywhere.

For more information on this and other topics see [Addendum J in the Army Posture Statement](#).

Family Assistance Centers

What is it? The Army National Guard (ARNG) Joint Force Headquarters Command (JFHQ) within each state, territory, and the District of Columbia coordinates family assistance for all military

dependents within each respective location under the guidance of a State Family Support Program Director (SFPD). The ARNG validated a Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) requirement for 420 Family Assistance Centers (FACs) across the 54 states and territories in 2006. These FACs are strategically placed in each state and territory to overcome the geographic dispersion of both Active and Reserve Component families from centralized, installation-based service providers. From this baseline the ARNG can surge and relocate capacity and capability where needed. Each FAC is staffed with military and civilian personnel, members of the Recruiting and Retention force, Soldiers on Active Duty Special Work orders, contract personnel, temporary technicians, state employees, and volunteers.

What has the Army done? As of May 2006, 353 FACs are operational in all 50 States and 4 Territories. The number of support personnel operating the FACs is at 950 per month plus volunteers. In 2005, the FACs were staffed each month with over 1100 military, contract, and volunteer members.

What continued efforts does the Army have planned for the future? The FACs are important to support families of deployed Guard and Reserve service members as well as family members of geographically dispersed Active Duty Families. These centers are also critical to demobilizing service members and to the long-term health and welfare of the family unit. Support for a Soldier "decompression" program starts the long-term process of reintegration and continued support for the return to home, family, friends, and community.

Why is this important to the Army? For 2007, National Guard Bureau estimates the requirement to support 92 percent of the validated FAC requests and operate 350+ centers. The cost to operate the centers with the additional support of contract personnel in 2006 is 30 million dollars, of which, 23 million dollars is required for contracted personnel salaries, travel and training, and the additional 7 million dollars is needed for operational support costs.

For additional information, click here For more additional information on [Family Assistance Centers](#)

For more information on this and other topics see [Addendum J in the Army Posture Statement](#).



Soldiers provide humanitarian aid in Kenya

U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Eric Heaning helps U.S. Air Force Airmen and Kenyan workers unload mosquito nets in Nairobi, Kenya, recently. The mosquito nets are being provided by U.S. service members assigned to Combined Joint Task Force - Horn of Africa as humanitarian aid for the approximately 160,000 stranded victims of recent flooding in rural areas of Kenya.

(Photo by Robert Palomares)



From the Front Lines....



The last salute is a painful one for all

by Renita Foster
Fort Monmouth Public Affairs Office

Two inverted weapons with attached bayonet stood propped on an amphitheatre stage “inside the wire” (an American compound) in Iraq. Kevlars adorned the top of the rifles while dog tags hung down in front. Desert camouflage boots were positioned on either side.

Accompanying the make shift memorials were the American and Army flags, as well as the Company Guide On. Seated nearby were representatives from the fallen Soldiers’ unit including 2nd Lt. David Hilling, 3rd Platoon Leader, Charlie Company, 2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault.)

Almost five years earlier, Hilling had attended a similar service at the United States Military Academy at West Point the day after terrorists attacked the World Trade Center and Pentagon on Sept. 11, 2001. A ceremony he felt, that surely meant war in the near future.

A descendant from a long line of military ancestors, Hilling’s attraction to West Point was a natural one. He also recognized its excellent educational and job opportunities. And shortly after entering the Academy, Hilling also discovered a strong sense of duty toward his country.

Despite his Plebe (freshman) status, Hilling decided to take advantage of every opportunity to prepare himself for what would come to be known as the War on Terrorism.

He continuously opted for the most strenuous training available, which earned Hilling a place on the West Point Parachute Team his first year there. After his Yearling (sophomore) term, he attended Airborne School and spent the summer with the First Ranger Battalion at Hunter Army Airfield.

“These Soldiers were just returning from Iraq so I knew this would be a good experience,” said Hilling. “I performed every maneuver with my sponsor from an airborne jump to field training. Working with those soldiers inspired me to serve in the infantry.”

During Hilling’s Firstie (senior) year, he earned his Instructor Jump License and by graduation had acquired an impressive 615 jumps. Hilling also served as the Sandhurst Competition (worldwide military skill contest) Coordinator.

Infantry basic training and ranger school came next followed by deployment to Iraq. Armed with what Hilling described as excellent preparation and guidance, the newly commissioned Soldier was steadfastly confident he could perform his duties as a combat Soldier and looked forward to his first field experience.

“That first platoon leader command position in wartime is significant to new officers because they’re the first Soldiers I’m fighting with,” said Hilling. “They’re my brothers in arms, and I’m responsible for their lives.”

But Hilling had only been in country a short seven days when a duty came that he hadn’t counted on, not so soon anyway, saying goodbye to Soldiers killed under his command.

During an early morning security patrol, one of the platoon vehicles had struck an improvised explosive device instantly killing two Soldiers. Hilling and the company 1st Sgt. quickly assessed the situation and decided Hilling would accompany the fallen men back to the American compound while the more experienced veteran stayed with the rest of the platoon to continue the mission.

A medic attending one of the fallen Soldiers discovered a letter addressed to his wife in case of his death. He passed it to Hilling, who realized this was the same service member that had recently become the father of a baby girl. This made Hilling feel a strong obligation to make sure the letter was returned safely to the Soldier’s wife.

The memorial service began about a week later. Facing opposite Hilling from the front of the stage was his Commanding General and Brigade Commander with their Command Sgts. Maj., and members from his platoon. Because Hilling’s unit had also served with the 4th Infantry Division, commanders from that organization were also present. If ever a situation existed that demanded ultimate professionalism, Hilling knew this was it.

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The dedications to honoring the fallen Soldiers began with the Chaplain followed by the battalion commander. All too soon, it was Hilling's turn to speak. Knowing he had talked with one of the men just hours earlier made the task even harder.

"I got help from the platoon leader who had commanded them before me," said Hilling. "Knowing these men for only a short time made it difficult, but that's the way the Army is. Anything can happen at any time. Because this incident happened with under my command, it was my duty to honor them."

After the remembrance speeches came roll call; the company's 1st Sgt. stood and called the names of the squad including the lost members. The reply, "Here 1st Sgt," was given until silence followed the names of the deceased Soldiers. The names were called again, this time with both first and last, but there was only the stillness. The playing of Taps commenced followed by a 21 gun salute.

"It was that 'silence' after their names were called when it really hit me," said Hilling quietly. "That was the first time I truly understood they weren't here anymore."

The endearing hymn, *Amazing Grace*, was sung by all the service members. Then officers and Soldiers proceeded to the memorials to pay their last respects beginning with the slow salute. A salute reserved for fallen Soldiers and performed in a deliberate, unhurried manner because it's understood it will be their last.

It was the first time Hilling had ever performed the goodbye salute. As he brought his hand up, we thought about the last time he saw the Soldiers and the family and



2nd Lt. David Hilling on patrol in Iraq. (Photo courtesy of 2Lt. David Hilling)

friends they left behind.

"It's heartbreaking to perform this salute, but I'll do it whenever and wherever I'm called upon to do so," said Hilling. "This is a respectful and honorable way to remember fallen service members."

As a means to further honor the lost Soldiers, tokens such as Army coins were placed by the memorials. Other items offered by service members included pictures, a crucifix necklace, and even name tags ripped from the Velcro of the new Army Combat Uniforms.

"This memorabilia meant something to those of us who were left, the Soldiers I lost, and hopefully, the family when the keepsakes were given to them," said Hilling.

Last to say goodbye, was the brother of the squad leader who was killed. Watching the Soldier walk up alone, salute the memorial, maintain his professional bearing until leaving the stage, and then breaking down is one memory Hilling swears he will

never forget.

The military training Hilling had practiced so diligently now reminded him to return to the rest of his platoon still on patrol. Once there, he insisted on being the lead Soldier, walking over the same treacherous ground his platoon had driven on earlier.

"That's where faith comes in," said Hilling. "If it's my time so be it. By getting back out there, I felt I was giving back to God, my country, and my men. Every step I took was to help my remaining Soldiers refocus on their duties. If I had decided to just ride in the back of the truck, why would they even want to get back out there on patrol?"

"I will never forget these two Soldiers," Hilling continued. "And the best way to honor them is moving forward. I have a job to do, one that must be finished. To remember them, is to continue the mission."

War's cost gets personal

By Sandy Goss, NERO PAO

(The figures are reported nightly; 'two American Soldiers died in Iraq today bringing the total for this month to 27...' The numbers don't mean much unless you know one of them personally; and after four years of fighting, one of those numbers, had a name, a face and some great memories....)

Driving through the small city of Frederick, Md., one is struck by the similarity to Gettysburg; antique row houses seemingly transplanted from another time, another place. Or maybe Frederick resembles 18th century London or Amsterdam. Whatever; it is a pretty town. But we have come on a somber mission – to farewell Ryan Dennison, a young man of great potential and promise whose life ended during a furious gunfight with Al Qaeda in Mesopotamia.

As the narrow streets become increasingly jammed with men and women attired in black suits and dresses it becomes evident that St. John the Evangelist Roman Catholic Church cannot be far.... At the end of a long row of parked cars are the gray stone arches symbolizing our arrival at the first step of a long, sad journey. Immediately our eyes are drawn to a sea of American flags seemingly surrounding the church. It is only at this instant that the emotional enormity of the day's activities crash down upon us... the tears well up and the policeman directing us to our double-rowed parking place becomes a watery blur. *Please don't let me lose it before we even get the car parked!*

Parking a few yards down the street, we began walking toward the church and realized that the flags were not waving from a series of inanimate flag stands, but from 30 men and women attired in motorcycle leathers, jeans and heavy boots. The Patriot Guard, protectors of countless military funerals nationally is here! Men with flowing beards, others with foot-long gray ponytails, some skinny and others not-so skinny, here are men most of whose previous military experience stemmed from America's last great Asian conflict. Dozens of Harley-Davidson motorcycles parked street-side, while their owners, who received no welcome home from their war, stood at rigid attention, proudly and resolutely holding American flags at a 45-degree angle. Here to honor a fellow warrior. My wife whispers

"Thank you" to one of these guardians – how she can do this I don't know because I can only nod, blinking back the tears, desperate to make my way into the safety of the church where I can respectfully and appropriately dissolve. Through tear-filled eyes the journey is successfully completed – into the church and the last pew to the left.

Seated I glanced at the program proffered by the usher. Staring back at me were the dark eyes and brilliant smile of Captain John Ryan Dennison. The picture was familiar – I was there, I could reach out and touch him when it was taken – the picture from the Ranger School graduation as he stood alongside my stepson, Erik, also graduating from the same platoon, during the same ceremony. Ryan looked over at me and grinned as I snapped the picture on



Ranger School graduation was a happy time for all; we were able to spend some time with Erik (right) and Ryan (left) who were hungry and glad that Ranger School would now be but a memory. (Photo by Sandy Goss)

one of the happiest days of their young lives. There were other photos from that day – the last time I would see him, shake his hand and ask how much he was going to eat as soon as he could get away from Fort Benning. Now, sitting in the cavernous church I saw that grin and those twinkling eyes staring up at me. Tears began to trickle down my cheeks as I wondered "why, why, why?" He was so young when I first met him as Erik's roommate during their plebe year at West Point ("hey Erik! I'm hungry. Ask your mom to send some more poppy seed bread!") He was still young and energetic four years later during his commissioning ceremony, joining Lee and Grant and MacArthur and Eisenhower in that fabled "Long Gray Line."

* * *

John Ryan Dennison was 24 when he died. He was sent to Kuwait in August, 2006 and then deployed to Iraq the next month as a member of the 5th Squadron, 73rd Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division. He was killed on Nov. 15; and posthumously promoted to the rank of Captain.

* * *

John Ryan Dennison came from the small town of Ijamsville, southeast of Frederick, Md.

His parents, John and Shannon, met while they were stationed with the Army in Germany. It was there they adopted their first son – "John" to the Army, but "Ryan" to friends and family. His Navy pilot sister Colleen, graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy, so the annual Army-Navy football game always had special meaning for the Dennisons.... Coming from a military family it seemed only natural that on July 17, 2004, Ryan would marry a fellow West Point graduate, 1st Lt. Haley Dennison, who was serving in Afghanistan when he died.

John Dennison said his son was eager to serve in Iraq, "He wanted to lead troops and felt that's what he had been trained to do and wanted to go do it." One of his teachers, Norm Crosby, said that "I kidded him that I'd see him on the Joint Chiefs of Staff," while another, Michelle Shearer, said "There isn't anybody who didn't like Ryan Dennison."

* * *

As Capt. Dennison's flag-draped coffin was carried into the church by six service members and two civilians, each member of the Patriot Guard stood and saluted. The mourners inside the church rose as one when the coffin entered the building.

* * *

Deacon John Manley set the tone of the tributes honoring Ryan. "Ryan always had a smile on his face.... it's appropriate that this service is here – during the Civil War this church was a hospital, and Ryan had a deep interest in the Civil War," he said.

Chaplain (Capt.) Tim Maracle talked about Dennison's leadership, saying that he "... never 'just showed up'... he was some-

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one everyone looked up to and wanted to emulate... in many ways he elevated everyone around him... he did everything 110 percent. He always went after his dreams - he went to the toughest schools and was a member of the 82nd Airborne - America's 911 Call - and he was always out in front. His Squadron Commander said if his Soldiers didn't have enough to eat he would give him his food, if a Soldier didn't get or have enough sleep, Ryan would take his watch. He stood up and did what he believed. He was a Soldier who looked into the face of danger, gritted his teeth and stepped forward."

Matt Weintraub, a high school buddy said his friend "... was a leader - not arrogant - a born leader who was confident and competitive and always looking for a new challenge to overcome. He was at home in both the Ivory Tower or down in the muck. He was a fine leader and believed in living life to the fullest."

In the rear of the church it was difficult to hear as the echoes bounced off the stone walls. Looking down at the back page of the funeral program a photograph of Ryan shows him in the desert watching the sun rise on the horizon; superimposed on the photo are his comments dated Aug. 7.

"I am so thankful that God has blessed me with so much," it said. "If catastrophe strikes in Iraq, I will still feel so very blessed because I have lived the equivalent of four men's lives in my short 24 years on this planet.

"I owe it all to God, my Father," he continued. "He blessed me with wonderful friends, family and parents to adopt me! And most of all with my beautiful wife, my companion, my very best friend.

"I pray that I will remain vigilant and faithful as any disciple of Christ should be during a tour in the wilderness.

"Thank you God for all your blessings."

* * *

The funeral ended with the hymn "How Great Thou Art" softly sung through the tears of the congregation - as the casket was wheeled out, draped in the American flag and escorted by the eight pallbearers.

Ryan's widow, Haley followed closely behind the casket. Behind her a long line



Ranger School graduation was a happy time for Ryan who proudly displayed his Ranger Tab to his parents, John and Shannon.

(Photo by Sandy Goss)

of young lieutenants and a few captains followed - Montgomery, Hoops, Chung, Baker, Jessup, Graves, Moore, Shaw, Beck and two lieutenants, one male, one female, named Rybacki. Most wore combat patches on their right sleeves, a few wore the Combat Infantry Badge. All of them seemed so young but yet older than they should have been. A tall man clutching a maroon beret in his hand, walked behind them, two stars shining against green felt tabs on his shoulders - a general? Here? For Ryan? The general

"Capt. Dennison was a superb young officer and warrior. He led from the front in all that he did."

—Col. Bryan Owens, commander, 3rd Brigade Combat Team.

passed from sight as hundreds of mourners continued their long shuffle out of the church. Finally it was the turn for those of us in the last pew. We stepped into the center aisle and passed those few feet to the outside where many people seem confused, milling around slowly. I realized the tall man with the maroon beret was standing next to me. I looked up as he looked down. I nodded, incapable of speech and stared at the red, white and blue shoulder patch of the 82nd Airborne - America's 911 Call. Here was the division commander - possibly the first general officer to visit this historic town since the Civil War - and he was standing on the steps of a church where more Soldiers now stood than at any time since the days when it served as a makeshift hospital for soldiers wounded during the fighting at Antietam and Gettysburg. As the hundreds of mourners leaving the church daubed their tear-stained faces and red eyes with tissues or handkerchiefs, we nodded at each other not daring to speak; Frederick, Md. was a long way from Fayetteville, N.C. but maybe not too far for one warrior to honor another....

Returning to the car, we waited for the

procession to ease out for the long trip to Arlington National Cemetery. A half-dozen motorcycle policemen, members of the Maryland State Police, Frederick Police Department and Frederick County Sheriff's Office stood ten yards away, talking quietly until the Patriot Guard kicked their Hogs alive, throaty roars filling the quiet, tree-lined streets. The policemen stepped forward, hopped on their Harleys and sped off, leading the way to the Interstate and then to Arlington's tree-lined tranquility where Ryan would be buried with full military honors.

* * *

The procession over the Interstate moved at a 45-mile per hour pace. Access roads were usually blocked by state or local police; one or two roads remained open and several cars sped onto the highway and quickly darted into the protected convoy. Far in front, barely visible were the American flags whipping through the Harley's tailwind; behind, an unending column of headlights as the procession stretched through the Maryland countryside. Four employees of a United Healthcare office stood and stared at the procession, smoke

from their cigarettes rising above their heads. At a nameless overpass a solitary man dressed in brown saluted the column, knowing

only that an American hero was passing below his vantage point.

* * *

Ryan Dennison was a leader among leaders. At West Point where virtually every cadet is a former high school class president or athletic team captain or club president or some other kind of leader, there are no "wall-flowers." There are no "average" students. It is a school where leaders go to perfect their leadership skills, so it was especially noteworthy that Ryan was the president of West Point's skydiving team, the Black Knights - a leader amongst leaders, a man who earned the respect, trust, and loyalty of his peers. He motivated everyone around him to run faster, reach deeper and work harder. Such leadership is a unique gift and it exemplified who Ryan was.

* * *

As the B troop Scout Platoon leader, Ryan "... radiated an unequalled level of dedication and motivation that made everyone around him a better leader and person," said his troop commander, Capt.

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Stephen Dobbins. "He immediately distinguished himself as a powerful leader and mature officer as he led his platoon." And he took care of his Soldiers said the rear detachment commander, 1LT Robert Moore, repeated the Squadron Commander's observation, "If they didn't have enough to eat he gave them what he had... if they were tired, he let them sleep and he stayed up... his paratroopers were his brothers and he loved and respected them."

* * *

The security guard at Arlington National Cemetery claimed there were "300 cars in this procession," a figure impossible to verify, but there was no denying the apparently never-ending torrent of mourners flowing over the top of a small hill where the cars were parked near Arlington's Section 60. Hundreds of men, women, children, Soldiers and officers of all ranks mingled and moved to the gravesite. The Army Band and a company from the "Old Guard" led the horse-drawn caisson carrying the flag-draped casket to the gravesite. Maj. General David Rodriguez, commanding general, 82nd Airborne Div. escorted Ryan's wife, Haley as they and the rest of the family members followed the caisson. The four-beat thump, thump, thump of the drums, the clip-clop of steel horseshoes on the asphalt roadway and the low murmur from the mourners were interrupted briefly by the sound of chirping, happy birds flying in and around the trees.

The gray skies cleared and sunlight shone down upon the gravesite.

An Army chaplain read a Biblical passage designed to comfort the grieving widow and family members, the band played a traditional tune and then came the



Maj. Gen. David Rodriguez, "We all came to say farewell to a brave Soldier."

first of three volleys, fired with precision by the Old Guard. Far away another marching band was playing the Army Song and a different Honor Guard was firing a 21-gun salute to another fallen warrior.

As the last volley's echos faded away, the pallbearers crisply folded the American flag into the traditional triangle. The flag was then passed from one pallbearer to another and handed to Rodriguez. Turning toward the seated widow, the general knelt on one knee and presented the flag to her, "on behalf of a grateful nation...." Rising he turned to another Soldier holding a second, folded flag, retrieved it and turned to Ryan's mother. Kneeling yet again, he reached out and presented the second flag to her, touching her hand and repeating, "on behalf of a grateful nation...."

As Rodriguez rose the Chaplain announced that the ceremony was over but those wishing to make private farewells

were welcome to approach the casket. Many moved forward, knelt at the casket and touched it while whispering their personal prayers. A cavalry lieutenant complete with dress spurs and wide-brimmed hat trimmed with gold braid approached the casket and knelt. Shoulders heaving and tears flowing freely, 1Lt. Morinaga rose, came to attention and saluted his friend; tears still rolling down his cheeks as he stumbled away, a female companion helping to steady him.

* * *

At a post-burial reception at the Fort Myer Officer's Club, Ryan's friends and family mingled and reminisced about his life. Among the photo displays, a slide show and a basket of black aluminum memorial bracelets a tall man approached and offered his hand. "I saw you at the hotel this morning," said Maj. Gen. David Rodriguez. It was Rodriguez we'd seen attired in gray Army t-shirt, shorts and running shoes sitting at the table next to us during the 6:30 a.m. breakfast - Frederick, Md. didn't seem to be the place where one would expect to see a Soldier in his PT uniform. I told him that as we ate our breakfast, "I was wondering what is an Army guy doing here?" He smiled. "I saw you and your wife were dressed for a funeral and I realized why you were there, and now you know why I was there," he said. "We all came to say farewell to a brave Soldier."

Rodriguez was right; Ryan Dennison was a leader of leaders, respected and beloved by subordinates and superiors alike; his infectious grin and magnetic personality made everyone call him "friend." Beyond that, he was a hero and a brave Soldier who "looked into the face of danger, gritted his teeth and stepped forward."

He is missed.

The fight at Turki

The New York Times reported recently that Iraqi insurgents "have established training camps east of Baghdad that are turning out well-disciplined units willing to fight American forces in set-piece battles."

The Times said American soldiers fought such units in a pitched battle during mid-November in Turki, a village in volatile Diyala Province which borders Iran.

The battle began after an American commander flew a reconnaissance mission over the area and noticed a poorly camouflaged white car near a hole in the ground that looked like a hiding place. A squad was initially dropped off to investigate and additional Soldiers were subsequently dispatched to thoroughly investigate the area.

Three days later one of the American units searching the area was ambushed by an unknown number of Sunni Arab militants suspected of having ties to Al Qaeda in Mesopotamia. The fighting eventually became so intense that the Americans called in 12 hours of airstrikes. "At least 72 insurgents and two American officers were killed in more than 40 hours of fighting.... (American) Soldiers shot their way through a reed-strewn network of canals in extremely close combat," said the

Times. It was here that 1st LT Ryan Dennison and another American officer were killed in separate firefights.

The Times said these firefights were unlike the vast majority of engagements in Diyala, because here the insurgents stood and fought, "even deploying a platoon-size unit that showed remarkable discipline."

One captain said the unit was in "perfect military formation." Lt. Col. Andrew Poppas, commander of the Fifth Squadron, 73rd Cavalry, 82nd Airborne Division, and the man who initially saw the white car and subsequently sent his cavalry troops into the area, said later that the fighters at Turki "were disciplined and well trained, with well-aimed shots... We hadn't seen anything like this in years," he said.

What the ambushed American Soldiers didn't know was that they'd stumbled into maze of networked trenches in the farmland complete with sleeping areas, weapons caches and two well-hidden anti-aircraft guns.

One wonders what Ryan and his troopers thought as they faced this well-trained, well-entrenched enemy; an enemy that usually hits and runs but on this day chose to stay and slug it out with the cavalry.